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Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report summarizes the situation of Palestinian women between October 2007 and September 2008, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/11. It reviews the situation of Palestinian women and provides an overview of the assistance provided by entities of the United Nations system with regard to, inter alia, education and training; health; employment and entrepreneurship; women's human rights; violence against women; and humanitarian assistance. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2008/11 on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, the Economic and Social Council, concerned about the grave situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, requested the Secretary-General to continue to review the situation, in order to assist Palestinian women by all available means, including those laid out in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2008/6), and to submit to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-third session a report, including information provided by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

2. The present report covers the period from October 2007 to September 2008 and reviews the situation of Palestinian women based on information from United Nations bodies or individuals that monitor the situation of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Such bodies and individuals include the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

3. The report also reflects information submitted by entities of the United Nations system that provide assistance to Palestinian women, including the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

4. The following United Nations entities contributed their input to the present report through the United Nations country team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), WFP, and the World Health Organization (WHO).

5. The report concludes with recommendations on improving the situation of Palestinian women, including through the continued assistance of the United Nations system.

II. Situation of Palestinian women

6. During the reporting period, new hope for the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine emerged, with the launch of the Annapolis process and regular bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. The

Quartet, the League of Arab States, several Arab countries, as well as Turkey, contributed to regional efforts to advance peace (see A/63/368-S/2008/612, paras. 6-9).

7. The situation on the ground in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained difficult and hampered political efforts to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security. In the Gaza Strip, in particular, prolonged violence and a deepening humanitarian crisis prevailed (*ibid.*, para. 5). Despite the efforts to bring about peace, deaths and injuries resulting from the occupation and the internal conflict increased during 2007 and continued to rise in the first months of 2008.¹ In 2007, some 412 Palestinians were killed, including 10 women. Approximately 345 people were killed between the beginning of 2008 and 21 April 2008, 89 per cent of them in the Gaza Strip, including 31 women and 80 children.²

8. Within the framework of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, peacebuilding efforts by Palestinian organizations continued despite the difficult political circumstances. Civil society organizations, such as The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH) focused efforts on linking the political and social agendas of the Palestinian women's movement at the grass-roots level. In addition, the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace engaged in policy dialogue at the international and national levels, to increase women's participation in peace negotiations. The Commission included 20 Palestinian women leaders, working within governmental and non-governmental Palestinian organizations.³

9. Internal conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory compounded existing hardships. After the Hamas takeover of Gaza, additional restrictions on the movement of goods and people into the Gaza Strip, led to deteriorating conditions and shortages of basic commodities, including food, electricity and fuel. Increased restrictions on the operations of humanitarian agencies hindered the delivery of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (see A/63/74-E/2008/13, summary).

10. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories expressed serious concern about the continuing deterioration of the human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see A/63/273, paras. 114-118). In particular, the Committee noted that isolation of the Gaza Strip had the most dramatic impact on women and children (*ibid.*, para. 45).

11. The right to freedom of movement continued to be obstructed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In January 2008, the Human Rights Council expressed grave concern about "the continued closures of and within the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the restriction of the freedom of movement of people and goods, including the repeated closure of the crossing points of the Gaza Strip, which created an extremely precarious humanitarian situation for the civilian population

¹ World Health Organization, Health conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan: report of the Secretariat (A/61/INF.DOC./4), annex, para. 1.

² *Ibid.*, para. 13.

³ Department of Political Affairs contribution to the report (2008).

and impaired the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people".⁴ In September 2008, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 630 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement, including 93 staffed checkpoints and 537 unstaffed obstacles in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.⁵

12. The conflict continued to negatively impact the Palestinian economy as restrictions were tightened in the West Bank and Gaza's primary border crossings remained closed, thus constraining development projects.⁶ The International Monetary Fund reported that the macroeconomic environment had been less favourable than envisaged, unemployment and poverty remained high, especially in Gaza, and real incomes in the West Bank and Gaza were reduced by the sharp rise in inflation.⁶ The World Bank noted that as the Palestinian economy declined, the Occupied Palestinian Territory was steadily becoming more aid dependent.⁷

13. Based on the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey for 2007, about 79 per cent of households in Gaza and 46 per cent in the West Bank lived below the poverty line.⁸ In 2008, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs found that previously self-reliant families progressively were falling into poverty owing to the deteriorating Palestinian livelihoods.⁹ In fact, nearly two thirds (62.5 per cent) of female-headed households live in poverty.¹⁰ To cope with poverty and food insecurity, many parents reduced their food intake to allow their children to eat.¹¹

14. Poverty and the global rise in food prices greatly affect Palestinian living conditions.⁷ Owing to inadequate income and employment, 80 per cent of households in Gaza (1.3 million people), and 33 per cent in the West Bank (0.7 million people), are dependent on international food assistance.¹² A joint FAO/WFP/UNRWA rapid survey on food security found that despite humanitarian aid, food insecurity was on the rise and almost two thirds of household income was spent on food only.¹³ Moreover, the study found that women and children continued to be disproportionately affected by food insecurity. Food insecurity was found in households where the percentage of female residents was 50 per cent or higher.¹¹ This was explained by unequal employment rates between men and women with almost equal education levels, and the lack of integration of women in the formal labour market.¹¹

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 53 (A/63/53)*, chap. II.A, resolution 7/18, para. 3 (f).

⁵ OCHA Closure Update: Main Findings and Analysis (30 April-11 September 2008), September 2008.

⁶ International Monetary Fund, "Macroeconomic and Fiscal Framework for the West Bank and Gaza: Second Review of Progress", 22 September 2008.

⁷ World Bank, "Palestinian Economic Prospects: Aid, Access and Reform", September 2008.

⁸ UNRWA, "Prolonged Crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Socio-economic Developments in 2007", 2008, chap. VI.

⁹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *The Humanitarian Monitor — Occupied Palestinian Territory*, No. 25 (May 2008).

¹⁰ UNFPA Occupied Palestinian Territory Consolidated Appeals Process 2008.

¹¹ United Nations country team Occupied Palestinian Territory contribution to the report (2008).

¹² International Labour Organization, Report of the Director-General, on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, 2008.

¹³ World Food Programme, *Food Security and Market Monitoring Report*, No. 19 (July 2008).

15. During the period under review, the employment and labour situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate. ILO reported a much degraded employment and labour situation owing to continuing impediments to the movement of persons and goods in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Only one in three persons of working age was employed; enterprises were either closing or operating well below their capacity and new investments were deferred.¹²

16. Women were more likely not to participate in the labour force than men. For the second quarter (April-June 2008), the labour participation rate of women was 16.0 per cent compared to 66.3 per cent for men.¹⁴ Some 64.4 per cent of men with 13 or more years of schooling participated in the labour force, compared to 42.1 per cent of women with the same number of years of schooling.¹⁴ For young women aged 15 to 19, the participation rate was 2.1 per cent compared to 25.4 per cent for young men of the same age group.¹⁵

17. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that for the second quarter of 2008 (April-June), the percentage of women in agriculture, fishing and forestry was higher than that of men — 30.7 per cent of women and 11.0 per cent of men.¹⁶ An ILO study found that 60 per cent of female workers and only 16 per cent of male workers were located in the informal economy.¹⁷ The high percentage of women in informal employment was attributed to the lack of an adequate and affordable social infrastructure and services that placed the burden of caring for the young, elderly, and the sick on women, thus limiting their employment options and steering them into informal work arrangements often performed from home.¹⁷

18. Movement restrictions negatively affected women's health. In the period under review, 69 pregnant women were forced to give birth at Israeli military checkpoints. Thirty-nine babies and five women died as a result.¹⁸ Since childbirth facilities are located in urban-based hospitals, some pregnant women moved to the homes of relatives living in towns a few weeks before the expected delivery (see A/HRC/7/44, para. 7 (d) and (e)). The attendance rate for newly pregnant women at maternal and child health-care clinics decreased from 4.8 visits per pregnant woman in 2005 to 3.7 visits per pregnant woman in 2006.¹⁹ The Ministry of Health collaborated with international agencies, including UNICEF, to secure vaccines for newborn babies, children and mothers.²⁰

19. WHO reported that the health conditions of female prisoners in general were extremely difficult and poor.²¹ At the end of July 2008, it was reported that 77 Palestinian female security prisoners were held in Israeli prisons and detention centres.²² Approximately 25 per cent of Palestinian female prisoners suffered from

¹⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey (April-June 2008) Round (Q2/2008), 15 September 2008, table 6.

¹⁵ Ibid., table 8.

¹⁶ Palestinian Authority: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics: Labour Force Survey (April-June 2008).

¹⁷ International Labour Organization, *Unprotected Employment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: A Gender Equality and Workers' Rights Perspective*, Beirut, 2008, Executive Summary.

¹⁸ World Health Organization, 2008, op. cit., para. 16.

¹⁹ World Health Organization, 2008, op. cit., para. 61.

²⁰ Ibid., para. 63.

²¹ Ibid., para. 12.

²² Mandela Institute for Human Rights, referenced in the UNIFEM executed project "Protection of Female Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons and Detention Centers", as cited in United Nations country team contribution to the report (2008).

treatable illnesses, including excessive weight loss, general weakness, anaemia and iron deficiency owing to poor quality food and the lack of essential nutrients.²³ In addition, they were exposed to harsh treatment from male and female prison officers, with no regard for their condition or their special needs in pregnancy.²¹

20. Recent assessments of the psychosocial well-being of the Palestinian population showed that severe stress and other mental health problems had increased. The prolonged tension, lack of physical security, mobility restrictions and limited educational and leisure opportunities were identified as some of the causes of psychological strain for many Palestinians, especially women, children and adolescents.¹⁰

21. Incidents of violence against women, including domestic violence, continued during the period under review. Results of a UNFPA survey and a UNRWA qualitative study associated the increase of domestic violence rates with the rising political violence in 2007.¹¹ The UNRWA study also indicated that rates of domestic violence had risen since the commencement of the second intifada in September 2000, with men using women as outlets for their anger, frustration and powerlessness.¹¹ UNFPA found that the majority of married (61.7 per cent) and unmarried (53.3 per cent) women were exposed to psychological violence.¹⁰ Poverty, low education levels, lack of decision-making power, violent childhoods, conflict in the community, drug abuse and lack of access to divorce were all viewed by refugee women as causes of domestic violence. A link was also made between little or no income in female-headed households and domestic and gender-based violence.¹¹

22. The right to education continued to be seriously affected by the occupation.¹¹ Although girls outnumbered boys in primary and secondary enrolment for the academic year 2007/2008 (548,781 women versus 548,314 men), the female dropout rate continued to surpass the male dropout rate at the secondary level — 3.8 per cent versus 3 per cent.²⁴ The school dropouts were attributed to early marriage, the economic situation and travel restrictions.¹¹ In the period under review, UNICEF also reported that young Palestinian girls continued to have few opportunities for development, recreation and participation. There were few safe spaces for them to go, and most of the 300 youth clubs across the Occupied Palestinian Territory lacked funding and were poorly managed and equipped. UNICEF also indicated that adolescence was often compromised by household demands and early marriage of young women and girls.²⁵

23. The percentage of women in decision-making remained low. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, women accounted for 12.6 per cent of the members of the Legislative Council; 7.4 per cent of ambassadors; 11.2 per cent of judges; and 12.1 per cent of general prosecutors.²⁶

²³ Fact sheet "Medical neglect of Palestinian Women in Israeli prisons", published by Addameer Prisoners Support and Human Rights Association, Mandela Institute for Human Rights and Palestinian Counseling Center, June 2008, within the Protection of Palestinian Female Prisoners and Detainees in Israeli Prisons and Detention Centers project, available at: http://www.aseerat.ps/files/FactsheetJune2008_-_Neglect.pdf (in United Nations country team contribution).

²⁴ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "Palestine in Figures 2007", May 2008, p. 23.

²⁵ UNICEF contribution to the report (2008).

²⁶ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, press release, 6 March 2008.

III. Assistance to Palestinian women

24. The following section focuses on the assistance provided to Palestinian women by entities of the United Nations system. Based on contributions from United Nations entities, eight areas of support were identified: education and training; health; employment and entrepreneurship; women's human rights; violence against women; humanitarian assistance; advocacy and information; and interagency coordination efforts, including gender mainstreaming.

A. Education and training

25. Several United Nations entities reported on initiatives to improve the access of women and girls to quality education opportunities and a gender-sensitive curriculum. During the 2006/2007 academic year, 241,183 girls (50.1 per cent of pupils) were enrolled in UNRWA elementary, preparatory and secondary schools. Girls constituted 69.8 per cent of students benefiting from the UNRWA-administered scholarships. UNDP provided remedial literacy and English and computer training to 3,925 female dropout students.

26. As part of the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) framework and in collaboration with UNICEF, UNIFEM and UNFPA, UNESCO commissioned a study on "Scaling up" girls' education in 2007. As a follow-up to the study, a Vocational Guidance and Counselling System was established within the Palestinian education system, supported by UNESCO. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to, inter alia, provide math and science teaching kits to disadvantaged schools to improve the teaching and learning process in classrooms. UNICEF also supported the finalization of the five-year education plan aimed at providing equal and quality educational opportunities for girls and boys. Six young women were employed by UNIFEM to offer academic guidance to young girls in schools. UNFPA supported the Ministry of Education's efforts to increase access to gender-sensitive life-skills based sexual and reproductive health education in secondary schools.

27. Construction and/or rehabilitation of community buildings for schools and the provision of school supplies were reported by United Nations entities as key steps to support girls' access to education. For example, UNDP supported the construction of classrooms, libraries and laboratories in 16 schools, including all-girls schools. It supported the construction of three kindergartens that were managed by women's centres or local councils, and created six permanent jobs for women as teachers and administrators. UNICEF worked with the Palestinian Water Authority and the Coastal Municipal Water Utility to provide water to 120 schools, construct 10 sanitary units at Farabi Girls Primary School, and raise awareness on personal hygiene and environmental sanitation in schools and selected vulnerable communities.

28. Training programmes for women were provided in a wide range of areas related to vocational and professional development. UNRWA reported that 2,109 girls received technical and vocational training (36.3 per cent of total students). Some 53 per cent of the Agency's more than 18,000 teaching staff were women. Professional training opportunities were offered to 445 of the teaching staff, 49 per cent of whom were women. Through its Small and Microenterprise Training

Programme, customized for the needs of microentrepreneurs and small business owners in Gaza, the Agency offered 563 courses for more than 11,907 participants, 20 per cent of them women. UNESCO and the Ministry of Culture trained 25 Palestinian women in traditional arts and crafts. Within the UNESCO Architectural Competition for the Design of Public Spaces and Urban Facilities in the Old City of Nablus, 16 young women architects were assigned to professionals to develop their design concepts into executive designs. Four junior women architects benefited from "learning by doing" training associated with the Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan.

29. Training programmes were also promoted as a means to enhance women's leadership and increase their access to and benefits from information and communication technologies. For example, in 2007, UNESCO supported the project "Giving women a voice" to build capacity and campaigning skills of 20 young women community leaders in Hebron and the southern rural area of the West Bank. In 2008, UNESCO also supported the project "Women taking the lead", in cooperation with the Arabic Media Internet Network, which provided a training and career development programme for 15 women journalists and 30 media managers in Gaza and West Bank.

30. In Gaza, UNDP established centres aimed at providing equal access to social and economic services for women and their families. In addition to developing women's skills, the centres also offered women safe meeting and working spaces and informal psychosocial support. Some 219 training courses, seminars or workshops were held on an annual basis in the centres; 65 women benefited from permanent jobs created by the centres.

B. Health

31. Several United Nations entities reported on activities to promote equal access to health care for Palestinian women. WHO facilitated health coordination meetings with health-care providers at district level, to formulate solutions to women's and girls' needs for preventive health services, including mammography tests. WHO collaborated with UNFPA in providing medicines and equipment for health services targeted to women of childbearing age.

32. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, UNICEF provided 452 first aid kits, 13 emergency health kits, 10 midwifery kits, 16 obstetric surgical kits and 60 resuscitation kits to the Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

33. UNRWA offered full immunization coverage of women against vaccine-preventable diseases. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health with the procurement of vaccines and related supplies for more than 100,000 women of childbearing age.

34. With support from UNIFEM, permits were obtained for 28 external doctors to enter prisons and examine female prisoners in need of specialized medical care.

35. Family planning and antenatal care were given priority by a number of entities to ensure safe deliveries for women in isolated areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Approximately 90,000 women received antenatal care in the five fields of UNRWA operation. More than 24,000 new female patients sought guidance on

family planning. WHO provided the Ministry of Health with recommendations aimed at improving pregnant women's access to health facilities. UNFPA supported 39 public clinics aimed at strengthening the integration of reproductive health services in primary health care, and promoted attention to gender-based violence in counselling services offered in primary health-care facilities. Qualified staff, including physicians, nurses and midwives, were retrained by UNFPA as obstetric care emergency staff in the West Bank and Gaza.

36. Various entities also provided psychosocial counselling to women. The UNRWA Community Mental Health Programme in the West Bank and Gaza Strip provided psychosocial support to 6,321 Palestinian refugee women. Four UNFPA-supported women's health centres provided clinical, psychosocial, legal advice, outreach, physiotherapy, gymnastics and health education services to women living in underprivileged areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. UNIFEM continued to provide rural women in marginalized areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip with legal and psychosocial group counselling sessions, one-on-one consultations and specialized treatment for mental health problems. During the period under review, UNIFEM trained 115 women leaders as community resource persons on mental health issues. One-on-one psychosocial consultation/counselling was provided to 150 women, and an additional 1,200 women benefited from group psychological counselling sessions.

37. UNDP organized workshops and provided psychosocial support to 500 women. Five women were employed to conduct counselling services and train other women on conflict resolution, self-confidence and communication skills. UNDP also conducted health-awareness sessions and provided free medical consultations for 6,270 women, and psychological and legal-awareness sessions for 12,620 women to help them to cope with stress. In partnership with UNIFEM, UNICEF reinforced its crisis intervention teams in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, to increase their ability to deal more effectively with women needing psychosocial assistance.

38. Gender-sensitive health education and training programmes, including on HIV/AIDS, was provided. UNRWA promoted health education programmes on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, including for its entire staff.

39. WHO supported the Ministry of Health in establishing and operating thematic groups on reproductive health, nutrition and mental health, to facilitate and coordinate activities of care providers, providing advice, recommending priorities and exchanging information.

C. Employment and entrepreneurship

40. United Nations entities reported on efforts to create work for women to promote self-reliance and restore livelihoods that would contribute to longer-term food security. WFP prepared a package of job creation, income-generation, vocational training and livelihood support to assist poor farmers, unemployed workers and vulnerable women. Priority was given to female-headed households which comprise 33.6 per cent (2,850) of the beneficiaries assisted in the West Bank and 50.6 per cent (82,560) in Gaza.

41. Thirty per cent of the beneficiaries of the UNRWA Job Creation Programme, operating in the West Bank and Gaza, were women. Within this Programme,

UNRWA/Gaza Field Office developed a maternity policy that enabled pregnant contract holders to enjoy 42 days of unpaid maternity leave without losing their jobs. A gender-sensitive monitoring mechanism was created to ensure a decent work environment for women, including through the UNRWA Breastfeeding Policy.

42. Several United Nations entities provided grants and training to enhance Palestinian women's entrepreneurship. UNDP offered training to 18 low-income women in two women's centres in Jabalia and Nuseirat. Some 24 women benefited from the construction of the Jenin Vocational Training Centre and its courses on fashion design, computer and secretarial skills. In the Gaza Strip, UNDP trained 1,043 poor housewives on recycling household waste and manufacturing home decorations; conducted income-generation projects for five women organizations; and trained 30 women on starting and managing their own businesses. The UNDP programme also trained 60 women on civic education. In the West Bank, UNIFEM trained 250 poor women on managerial and technical skills to process local surplus of fruits and vegetables into healthy marketable products.

43. The ILO Regional Office in Beirut, together with the Palestinian firm Riyada Consulting and Training, prepared a paper entitled "Situation and institutional assessment of business women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory", which assessed the level of involvement of women in private sector institutions. In March 2008, ILO conducted a regional training of trainers on "Gender and entrepreneurship together", attended by four Palestinian representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business women associations and training centres, with the objective of assisting ILO partner organizations to promote enterprise development among poor women.

44. UNRWA and IFAD reported microcredit schemes for women as critical to poverty reduction and women's economic empowerment. UNRWA disbursed over 2,030 new group loans valued at almost US\$ 900,000 to women microentrepreneurs in the Gaza Strip. Through its direct and indirect lending schemes, the Agency extended 1,950 microcredit loans to Palestine refugees, 81 per cent of whom were women.

45. FAO completed the women's empowerment project on "Support to household food security and income generation through biointensive backyard agricultural production and cottage industry in the West Bank and Gaza Strip", which targets East Jerusalem, Hebron, Jenin and Gaza. Beehives and rabbits were distributed to 500 women for income generation and household consumption. FAO promoted a national exhibition for women's associations in Ramallah, which allowed them to market their crafts and their agricultural and food products. The FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools scheme was also launched to build livelihood and entrepreneurship skills of youth, including young women. The project liaises with 16 NGOs throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

46. UNCTAD reported on its two-year project (2006-2008) titled "Establishment of the Palestinian Shippers Council", which represents and protects the interests of Palestinian shippers and exporters. UNCTAD emphasized that the Council, which is chaired by a businesswoman, is committed to recruiting female members and encourages their full participation in all Council activities.

D. Women's human rights

47. United Nations entities reported advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns on the human rights of women and girls. On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in 2007, OHCHR implemented a three-day campaign in the West Bank aimed at promoting the protection of the rights of Palestinian women. UNDP conducted an awareness-raising campaign on violence against women, offered courses for 1,200 women and men on women's rights and trained 20 female lawyers on women's rights advocacy for women victims exposed to violence.

48. During the period under review, significant support was provided to capacity-building on women's human rights. OHCHR, in cooperation with the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development, organized an event for 30 men and women that focused on the challenges faced by women in the enjoyment of their human rights, best practices on legal investigations on violence against women and girls and ways to access the United Nations mechanisms for the protection of women's rights. UNIFEM supported the production of a gender-sensitive academic counselling manual and the provision of legal literacy sessions to nearly 1,500 women about the Palestinian legal system. A regional workshop for judges and parliamentarians on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was co-organized by the ESCWA Centre for Women and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in Jordan in October 2007. Three Palestinian women attended the training, one member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and two judges.

49. Through its project "Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre" in Ramallah, UNESCO supported the development of the human and institutional capacities of governmental and non-governmental organizations related to women's rights. UNESCO and the Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting in the Gaza Strip, started collecting stories of discrimination against women to contribute to the UNIFEM initiative entitled "The CEDAW Stories". Seventy stories had been collected up to August 2008. UNESCO also commissioned a paper entitled "Listening to girls' stories: girls' education in conflict"; and produced a fact sheet on Palestinian women and education. The Centre for Women's Legal Research and Consulting conducted several trainings targeted at Government and NGOs. A total of 28 staff members from the legal department of the Palestinian Authority were also trained on analysing laws from a gender perspective. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were taught from a gender perspective to 42 trainees from departments in the Palestinian Authority by the Centre.

50. UNFPA collaborated with the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, a Jerusalem-based Palestinian NGO, in the development of a manual for service providers on a gender-sensitive approach to psychosocial and legal counselling. The UNRWA Gaza Field Office launched the wide-reaching empowerment initiative, "Equality in action", focusing on achieving equality with regard to status, options and opportunities for women and men across the Gaza Strip. Through its 65 women's programme centres, the Agency supported evening classes and continued learning for 2,345 women, awareness sessions on women's rights for 11,952 women and youth-related activities for 19,529 girls. UNIFEM organized activities and workshops, including on the Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 80 community centres in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

51. United Nations entities reported on efforts to promote the rights of young women. UNICEF Jordan promoted awareness-raising activities targeted at parents and community members on the rights of adolescents, particularly those of girls. These activities led to an increase in the participation of girls in developmental and learning activities in women's programme centres. UNIFEM continued supporting the Youth Rights Monitor project, implemented by a local NGO specialized on media and youth. A group of 98 youth role-model-activists (50 females and 48 males) was formed to promote awareness on rights and responsibilities among their peers and younger beneficiaries.

52. Women with special needs were also the focus of various initiatives promoted by United Nations entities. For example, OHCHR, in partnership with the Stars of Hope Society for Empowerment of Women with Disability, organized a high-level event entitled "Try the wheelchair", to sensitize participants about the reality of Palestinian women living with disabilities. In Rafah Governorate, UNDP established a special club for hearing-impaired women and men and provided activities for approximately 200 members, including art, handcraft and sports.

E. Violence against women

53. United Nations entities continued to address violence against women as a serious violation of the human rights of women. For example, in December 2007, a one-week study tour for 14 representatives of local Palestinian NGOs from the West Bank was hosted by OHCHR in Geneva, to enhance the interaction of NGOs with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and to design strategies to combat violence against women. A national conference on combating gender-based violence was organized by UNFPA and the Ministry of Women's Affairs. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, field research on forced prostitution and women's trafficking was supported by UNIFEM and implemented by a local NGO. UNIFEM upgraded two toll-free help lines in Gaza and one in the West Bank for female victims of violence. More than 9,300 women received counselling and awareness-raising through this initiative.

54. United Nations entities undertook several initiatives aimed at training women to protect themselves from violence and enhancing the institutional capacity of NGO partners to prevent violence and support victims. For example, UNFPA and its NGO partners created community-based initiatives that enable women to protect themselves from gender-based violence. The Fund also helped to build the capacity of local institutions to integrate women's protection within the package of psychological support offered for women at risk; and promoted the collaboration of two NGOs in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip, to strengthen their awareness-raising capacity at the community level on violence against women.

55. Entities from the United Nations reported efforts to build alliances with strategic governmental organizations, as well as civic and civil society actors, to prevent violence against women. For example, UNFPA worked with civil society and faith-based organizations on the promotion of women's rights and the elimination of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation. In 2008, UNFPA and the Ministry of Social Affairs started a project to strengthen vocational

training for young women and to enhance the capacity of Ministry staff in the area of protection against and prevention of gender-based violence.

56. UNFPA also worked with national partners in their implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, through the creation of community-based initiatives that empower women to protect themselves from gender-based violence. These initiatives also helped to build the capacity of NGOs to improve services, particularly psychosocial support. UNIFEM continued its support of the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Palestinian-Israeli Peace.³

F. Humanitarian assistance

57. United Nations entities continued to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinian women living in refugee camps and disadvantaged villages. For example, UNRWA assisted the poorest registered refugees, mostly families headed by women. The Agency's special hardship assistance provided the families with a safety net that included food support, cash assistance, and preferential access to the Agency's vocational training centres.

58. Food security was addressed as a priority in several initiatives undertaken by United Nations entities. School feeding in the most insecure areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip aimed at encouraging parents to keep children in school and provided employment opportunities to the community. The WFP Food for Training Programme implemented in the West Bank targeted 9,200 women and focused on home gardening, handicrafts, food processing, animal raising, agriculture and beekeeping. Some 8,400 women benefited from life-skills training on health and nutrition. Through a cash-for-work scheme, the Programme also introduced school feeding to preschool and primary school children in the most food-insecure areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It provided part of the food commodities and salaries for 2,000 women in local bakeries and women's centres. The UNRWA food aid programme benefited 112,256 pregnant women and nursing mothers and 56,587 women were assisted with admission to hospitals. In the Gaza Strip, UNIFEM piloted a school feeding initiative benefiting 450 children in kindergartens in the Nuseirat refugee camp, involving 12 women workers. In Jordan, UNICEF assisted Palestinian refugee women with access to neonatal care and nutrition support.

59. The WFP institutional feeding programme also supported women residing in institutions such as orphanages, hospitals and homes for the elderly. Beneficiaries of the programme included 2,400 women in Gaza and 5,100 women in the West Bank. Under the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation, launched in September 2007, WFP and the Ministry of Social Affairs worked to cover the food needs of destitute people, in particular widows, divorced and separated women, and elderly single women. Some 57 per cent (15,000) of the beneficiaries in the West Bank and 55 per cent (47,000) in Gaza were women.

60. United Nations entities reported initiatives to contribute to adequate housing. For example, UNRWA assisted 265 female-headed households with shelter reconstruction or rehabilitation; 11 per cent of refugees participating in infrastructural self-help projects were women. The Saudi Committee for the Palestinian People Relief pledged \$6.3 million to UN-Habitat for the project on "Establishment of a housing and income-generating programme for poor women in

Hebron, West Bank". The project includes the construction of 100 housing units and the establishment of small-scale income-generating activities targeted to poor women and their families.

G. Advocacy and information

61. Several United Nations entities collected, analysed and disseminated information on the situation of Palestinian women and advocated for women's empowerment and gender equality. For example, WHO continued to collect information on the health implications of restricted mobility for women.

62. Media resources were used as advocacy tools to bring attention to the situation of women in the region. For example, through its publications programme, the Division for the Palestinian Rights within the Department of Political Affairs included information on the situation of Palestinian women in its monthly compilation entitled "Chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine", and the bimonthly newsletter "NGO Action News". UNFPA published a study entitled "Women in crisis and cultural preservation".

63. On the occasion of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign 2007" (25 November-10 December 2007), UNFPA promoted actions to combat violence against women through posters, workshops, and television and radio spots, initiating a platform for discussion among a number of different actors. UNIFEM produced billboards and reserved radio time to advocate for women's rights. It also conducted advocacy and media campaigns on the conditions of women in prisons and detention centres. UNIFEM also screened a documentary entitled *Maria's Grotto*, on crimes committed in the name of honour, for over 600 women. In consultation with OHCHR, UNIFEM produced a DVD, *Women Capable of Making a Difference*, in Arabic with English subtitles, which sheds light on the situation of women in the Gaza Strip.

64. Initiatives on research and documentation on the situation of Palestinian women were supported by a number of United Nations entities. Under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs, addressed the issue of Palestinian women in discussions at international meetings and conferences. The ILO Regional Office produced the study, *Unprotected Employment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: A Gender Equality and Workers' Rights Perspective*, which was published in Arabic and English. The case study was presented during a Regional Expert Group Meeting on gender equality and workers' rights in the informal economies of Arab States, held in Tunis in July 2008.

65. The Advocacy and Research Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs increased efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data in its Protection of Civilians database and increasingly paid attention to gender equality issues in its publications *Humanitarian Monitor* and *Protection of Civilians Weekly Report*.

H. Gender mainstreaming

66. Joint programming by United Nations entities is being promoted to enhance coordinated support to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including on gender mainstreaming initiatives. For example, the Department of Political Affairs reported that the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process oversaw six United Nations agencies' joint submission to the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Global Achievement Fund in close collaboration with the Palestinian Authority. The United Nations country team reported that under the Fund, UNESCO, UNIFEM, UNDP and FAO also developed a three-year joint programme on "Culture and development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory" and UNIFEM provided technical support to ensure that a gender perspective was incorporated in the programme document.

67. UNDP took the initiative to build internal staff capacity on gender mainstreaming in order to provide effective support to Palestinian women. For example, training was provided to more than 40 operational and programme staff in the UNDP/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), including on gender sensitization, gender analysis, and gender sensitive indicators in programmes. A UNDP/PAPP gender strategy was drafted. In August 2008, a senior Social Development and Gender Adviser was hired to offer technical support to UNDP/PAPP and other United Nations entities, NGOs and governmental partners.

68. In June 2008, UNIFEM conducted two training sessions on gender mainstreaming. The first was targeted at key programme staff from United Nations entities, including those participating in the joint Millennium Development Goals programmes, and the Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Women's Affairs. The second involved heads of agencies in discussions on gender mainstreaming within the context of the United Nations country team Performance Indicators for Gender Equality. UNIFEM and FAO conducted a one-day sector-specific gender workshop on "Mainstreaming gender in agricultural issues", to discuss the meaning and importance of integrating gender perspective into planning, implementation and monitoring of food security-related projects.

69. Other entities adopted policies and employed specialists to advance the gender mainstreaming strategy. UNFPA partnered with civil society organizations to build their capacity in advocating for gender mainstreaming in the health sector and planning and budgeting processes. In November 2007, the ESCWA Centre for Women and UNIFEM organized a joint regional workshop on gender-responsive budgeting in Amman, which aimed at highlighting the importance of gender-responsive budgeting for incorporating gender perspectives into policies, programmes and projects. Two representatives from the national machinery on women of the Palestinian Authority attended the training.

70. Other United Nations entities adopted training as key for capacity-building for gender mainstreaming. ILO sponsored an official of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to participate in an intensive training course on participatory gender auditing in the ILO Training Centre in Turin, Italy, in May 2008, which resulted in the Ministry working on a strategy for implementing participatory gender audits within institutions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In September 2007, the ESCWA Centre for Women conducted an expert group meeting for the enhancement of the

work of national machineries for mainstreaming gender perspectives into policies, programmes and projects.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

71. During the period under review, efforts continued at the national, regional and international levels to bring about a peaceful settlement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including through bilateral negotiations. Despite these efforts, the crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued with negative social and economic impacts on the Palestinian people, including on women and girls.

72. The situation of Palestinian women was directly affected by continued poverty and unemployment and the decline in living standards and food security. The movement of women and girls continued to be restricted by closures, checkpoints and roadblocks, which limited their access to health-care services, employment and education. Pregnant women had difficulties accessing health services for antenatal care and safe delivery. Movement restrictions also contributed to school dropout rates among girls. Incidents of violence against women, including domestic violence, also continued during the period under review.

73. Improving the situation of and enhancing the impact of assistance to Palestinian women is linked to the achievement of a secure and lasting peace. Renewed efforts need to be taken by all relevant actors at the international, regional and national levels, including measures to ensure that women participate fully in all conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the region, in accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

74. United Nations entities should continue to provide assistance to women and girls in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and refugee camps, particularly in areas such as education, health, social welfare, employment and economic development. Enhanced efforts should also be made to increase women's full participation in decision-making processes at all levels and ensure their economic empowerment.

75. A gender perspective should be fully integrated into all international assistance programmes, through, inter alia, gender analysis, the collection of sex-disaggregated data and the use of gender-responsive budgeting processes. All studies and reports undertaken by the United Nations on the situation of the Palestinian people should incorporate specific attention to gender equality perspectives. Governments, international organizations, civil society, including non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions, should be encouraged to collaborate on qualitative and quantitative action-oriented research on the situation of Palestinian women and girls.

76. Member States, entities of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders should intensify their efforts to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women and girls and systematically assess and report on the impact of those efforts.



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**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,
entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and
peace for the twenty-first century": gender mainstreaming,
situations and programmatic matters**

Women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to resolution 52/4 of the Commission on the Status of Women on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS. It focuses on activities undertaken by Member States and United Nations entities to implement the resolution. It concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Commission.

* E/CN.6/2009/1.



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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/4, the Commission on the Status of Women requested the Secretary-General to report to its fifty-third session on the implementation of that resolution, using information from Member States and United Nations entities. The present report describes actions taken by various stakeholders in areas addressed by the resolution, identifies gaps and challenges, and proposes recommendations for consideration by the Commission. It is based on contributions by Member States¹ and United Nations entities.²

II. Background

2. Gender inequality is one of the key drivers of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.³ Women and adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to HIV/AIDS owing to biological conditions, economic and social inequalities and culturally accepted gender roles which place them in a subordinate position in relation to men regarding sexual decision-making (see E/CN.4/2004/66, para. 47). Moreover, women and girls are at increased risk of contracting HIV as they are often exposed to sexual violence, both inside and outside the home, and during armed conflict (see E/CN.4/2005/72, para. 26). Factors such as poverty, illiteracy and gender-based power imbalances within families and communities restrict women's access to preventive care, drugs and treatment (*ibid.*, para. 21). Women and girls bear the disproportionate burden to care for and support those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (see E/CN.6/2009/2 and E/CN.6/2009/4).

3. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (1994) addressed the issue of HIV within the context of sexual and reproductive health. It noted that, wherever possible, reproductive health programmes, including family-planning programmes, should include facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of common sexually transmitted diseases, including reproductive tract infection, recognizing that many sexually transmitted diseases increase the risk of HIV transmission.⁴ Donor and research communities were called

¹ Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Senegal, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand.

² Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and World Health Organization (WHO).

³ <http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/DriversOfTheEpidemic/default.asp> (accessed on 25/11/2008).

⁴ *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, para. 8.31.

on to support and strengthen current efforts to find a vaccine and to develop women-controlled methods, such as vaginal microbicides, to prevent HIV infection.⁵

4. HIV/AIDS was addressed in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) under the critical areas of concern on education and training of women, women and health, violence against women and the girl child. It called for the involvement of women in HIV/AIDS policies and programmes; the review and amendment of laws that contribute to women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and implementation of legislation, policies and practices to protect women and girls from HIV/AIDS-related discrimination; and the strengthening of national capacity to create and improve gender-sensitive policies and programmes on HIV/AIDS.⁶

5. At its twenty-third special session (2000), the General Assembly noted that gender equality is crucial to the prevention of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex, para. 44). The General Assembly called for priority attention to measures to prevent, detect and treat sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*, para. 72 (b)). Member States were called upon to design and implement programmes to encourage and enable men to adopt safe and responsible sexual and reproductive behaviour, and to use effective methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*, para. 72 (l)). The General Assembly also called upon Member States to encourage, through the media and other means, a high awareness of the harmful effects of certain traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women, some of which increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, and intensify efforts to eliminate such practices (*ibid.*, para. 98 (d)).

6. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), world leaders resolved to have halted, and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Millennium Development Goal 6 aims to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it by 2010 and to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

7. In June 2001, at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, dedicated to HIV/AIDS, Heads of State and Government issued the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which stressed that gender equality and women's empowerment were fundamental elements in the reduction of the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS, and included a set of time-bound targets, a number of which related specifically to women (General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex, paras. 14, 54, 59 and 60-62).

8. The Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted at the General Assembly 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS recognized that the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and the protection of the rights of the girl child must be key components of any comprehensive strategy to combat HIV/AIDS (General Assembly resolution 60/262, annex, para. 15). Member States committed to the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010 (*ibid.*, para. 20).

⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 8.33.

⁶ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, paras. 108 (a), (b) and (g).

9. Other recommendations of the Political Declaration included ensuring that pregnant women have access to HIV services and eliminating gender inequalities, gender-based abuse and violence and increasing the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection (*ibid.*, paras. 27 and 30). The Declaration called for creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment and for strengthening their economic independence; and in this context, reiterated the importance of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality (*ibid.*, para. 30). Further calls were made to strengthen legal, policy, administrative and other measures to promote and protect women's enjoyment of all human rights and reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*, para. 31).

10. During the 2005 World Summit, leaders committed to developing and implementing a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care with the aim of coming as close as possible to the goal of universal access to treatment by 2010 for all those who need it (General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 57 (d)).

11. Since its forty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women has adopted resolutions on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS on an annual basis. The Commission considered the issue of women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS as its priority theme and adopted agreed conclusions during its forty-fifth session in 2001.⁷ The Commission has addressed the issue within the context of other priority themes. In its agreed conclusions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, the Commission urged Governments to, *inter alia*, ensure that in all policies and programmes designed to provide comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support, particular attention and support was given to the girl child at risk, infected with, and affected by HIV/AIDS.⁸ Member States were called on to take appropriate measures to provide a supportive and socially inclusive environment for girls infected with, and affected by, HIV/AIDS.⁹

12. While some progress has been made with regard to these commitments, many of the recommendations have yet to be implemented. HIV/AIDS continues to impact women and girls in increasing numbers. Globally, the percentage of women among people living with HIV has remained stable (at 50 per cent) in recent years.¹⁰ However, women account for nearly 60 per cent of HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa¹¹ and women's share of infections has been increasing in a number of countries in other regions, particularly in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.¹²

13. In 14 of 17 African countries with adequate survey data, the percentage of young pregnant women (ages 15-24) who are living with HIV has declined since 2000-2001.¹³ However, among young people in Africa, HIV prevalence tends to be notably higher among women than among men. Young women represent about two

⁷ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 7 (E/2001/27-E/CN.6/2001/14), chap. I.A.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2007, *Supplement No. 7 (E/2007/27-E/CN.6/2007/9)*, chap. I, sect. A, para. 14.5 (a).

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 14.5 (d).

¹⁰ UNAIDS, "Report on the global AIDS epidemic", Geneva, 2008, p. 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹² Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, "Keeping the promise: an agenda for action on women and AIDS", Geneva, UNAIDS 2006, p. 8.

¹³ UNAIDS, 2008, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

thirds of all new cases among people aged 15 to 24 in developing countries, making them the most affected group in the world.¹⁴

III. Actions taken by Member States and the United Nations system¹⁵

A. National policies, legislation and strategies

14. The degree to which gender equality is a component of national HIV/AIDS responses has been monitored since 2003 through the National Composite Policy Index, one of the tools used to monitor the 2001 Declaration of Commitment. This index assesses progress in the development and implementation of national level HIV/AIDS policies and strategies.¹⁶ In 2008, more than 80 per cent of Governments reported a focus on women as part of their multisectoral strategy for HIV/AIDS and 67 per cent reported having laws protecting people with HIV from discrimination.¹⁷

15. Two major approaches have been used by Member States to address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. Some Member States incorporated gender perspectives in their national policies, programmes, strategic frameworks, and plans to systematically address HIV/AIDS (Albania, Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Lebanon, Paraguay, the Philippines, Qatar, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland and Thailand). Several Member States reported integrating measures to address HIV/AIDS in their national action plans on gender equality (Brazil, Cyprus and Romania). In some Member States, the national machinery for the advancement of women has taken initiatives to address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. In Peru, the Secretariat of State for Women promoted interinstitutional solutions to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls. In 2005, a lobbying campaign was launched with UNAIDS and others, targeting ministers, parliamentarians and the Supreme Court of Justice, which resulted in an agreement to jointly address the problem.

16. From 2004 to 2007, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the policies and plans developed by 20 national AIDS councils, and worked with 21 national AIDS councils and two regional bureaux to provide training in gender analysis and women's human rights-based approaches. A particularly successful approach was the collaboration between the United Nations partners and civil society organizations, including HIV-positive women's groups, to support the integration of gender equality priorities in the Nigerian National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS 2005-2009.¹⁸

¹⁴ Contribution by the UNAIDS secretariat to the report (2008).

¹⁵ Unless otherwise indicated information is from inputs received for the report.

¹⁶ UNAIDS, United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS, *Monitoring the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Guidelines on construction of core indicators*, Geneva, 2007, pp. 21 and 27.

¹⁷ UNAIDS, 2008, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁸ The incorporation of gender perspectives in the national response to HIV/AIDS has been documented for countries wishing to replicate the approach, *Mainstreaming Gender Equality into the National Response to HIV and AIDS: Nigerian Case Study* (available from: http://www.unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=93).

17. The UNIFEM publication on "Transforming the National AIDS Response: Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights into the 'Three Ones'" provides strategies for designing gender-sensitive HIV/AIDS policies, programmes and institutional mechanisms in the context of the "Three Ones" — one national AIDS action framework, one national AIDS coordinating authority and one system for monitoring and evaluation.
18. In collaboration with partners, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) developed "Report cards" for 23 countries targeted at decision-makers at the national, regional and international levels to increase and improve the programmatic, policy and funding actions on HIV prevention for young women and girls. The cards provided country profiles and information on HIV/AIDS prevention from the legal, policy, service availability and accessibility, participation and human rights perspectives, and included a set of recommendations.
19. Women must be represented in national planning and decision-making mechanisms to ensure that their priorities and needs are addressed. The UNAIDS country teams have worked to bring women's perspectives and leadership into national mechanisms, such as the national AIDS programmes. In a survey of 80 countries, 75 per cent reported that women participated during the review and revision of national AIDS plans. However, the survey revealed that there were varying degrees of participation of women's groups, and much more advocacy on their meaningful participation is needed.¹⁴
20. With respect to legislation, some Member States have formulated draft laws, while others amended existing laws, to address HIV/AIDS among women and girls. In Qatar, a draft law to protect those living with HIV/AIDS and uphold their rights in every aspect of life was under consideration. Jamaica amended several pieces of legislation to provide protection for women and girls in the context of HIV/AIDS. Serbia indicated that its legal framework ensured the provision of medical treatment to all people living with HIV in need, irrespective of sex.
21. According to OHCHR, some HIV-specific laws contain provisions that provide no or inadequate protection to women and children living with or affected by HIV. Some laws include discriminatory provisions which mandate testing of pregnant women, restrict HIV-prevention education targeted at children and criminalize the transmission or exposure to HIV.¹⁹ Broad application of criminal law to HIV transmission may disproportionately affect women, as they fail to disclose their HIV-positive status as a result of fear of violence or abandonment.²⁰
22. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) supported several African countries in developing appropriate legislation to safeguard property rights of widows and other vulnerable women, and provided technical support to Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe to formulate gender-sensitive agricultural and natural resource sector strategies on HIV/AIDS.
23. Despite progress achieved in increasing the gender-responsiveness of policy and legislation, challenges remain. Nearly two thirds (63 per cent) of countries report having laws, regulations, or policies in place that impede access to HIV

¹⁹ OHCHR contribution to the report (2008).

²⁰ UNAIDS Policy Brief, "Criminalization of HIV Transmission", 2008.

prevention, treatment, care, and support among populations most at risk.²¹ Some Member States do not guarantee non-discrimination in their laws or regulations that explicitly address the situation of women. Several countries lack information, education, and communication policies or strategies to encourage the involvement of men in reproductive health programmes.²²

B. Resource allocation

24. According to UNAIDS, only 52 per cent of Member States providing information on national progress in implementing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS reported having a dedicated budget allocation for programmes addressing gender equality and women's issues in 2007. These are mainly Asian and sub-Saharan African countries.²³

25. Several Member States reported on resources allocated to their HIV/AIDS response without providing specific details on the proportion assigned to addressing the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. Côte d'Ivoire created the National Fund for the Fight against AIDS with 500 million CFA francs (CFAF) to support non-governmental organizations engaged in HIV/AIDS programming, with a special focus on gender equality issues. The German Federal Government allocated about 2 million euros (€) to the Federal Ministry of Health for research and development projects on HIV/AIDS and for basic social science research on prevention, which will particularly focus on women-specific concerns. Argentina allocated, under its Government's budget for the Office for AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, nearly 80 million United States dollars (\$) to the proposals of the Strategic Plan 2008/2011, which contains gender perspectives in its target actions. Canada, as part of its Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS, launched the Specific Populations HIV/AIDS Initiatives Fund in 2006 to support national projects that aim to prevent HIV infection; increase access to diagnosis, care, treatment, and support; and increase healthy behaviours in populations most affected by HIV/AIDS and most vulnerable to infection, including women at risk. The Federal Initiative included gender-specific initiatives, including research, testing, counselling and surveillance on transmission and microbicides. The five-year Legal Empowerment of Women Initiative, valued at 5 million Canadian dollars (CAD\$) aimed to improve women's access to legal, property and inheritance rights in part to reduce their vulnerabilities to HIV/AIDS.

26. Denmark provided bilateral assistance to a number of countries, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, and multilateral assistance through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNAIDS and WHO as well as other international partners. The aim of these efforts is to promote female-controlled methods to prevent HIV/AIDS and highlight the link between HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

27. The Minister for Development Cooperation in the Netherlands launched an initiative with civil society and private companies that includes a focus on increasing the use of female condoms and combating domestic violence against

²¹ UNAIDS, 2008, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

women. In Côte d'Ivoire, CFAF 40 million was provided to NGOs for women living with HIV/AIDS. In Peru, the United States Agency for International Development supported women's organizations and civil society to train women living with HIV/AIDS in leadership, self-care and self-esteem.

28. In Germany, the BACKUP Initiative mechanism provided technical support and capacity development for gender-sensitive and transformative HIV programmes at the country level in order for affected countries to access resources of the Global Fund and to improve the quality of programme implementation.

29. The United Nations entities supported various Governments to increase resource allocation. For example, UNFPA supported national Governments in gender-responsive budgeting to ensure that adequate resources were available for women and girls within the context of HIV/AIDS work. The UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Programme on HIV/AIDS developed a costing tool to estimate HIV/AIDS resource needs in achieving the Millennium Development Goals targets on HIV and universal access, which included attention to women living with and affected by HIV.

C. Addressing risk, vulnerability and discrimination against women and girls

30. While certain behaviours, such as unprotected sex, increase the risk that a person may become infected with HIV, other factors beyond the control of the individual may reduce the ability of an individual to avoid HIV risk.²⁴ These include lack of knowledge and skills on protection against HIV infection; lack of access to services due to discrimination, socio-cultural norms, as well as other factors such as distance and cost to reach services. Lack of opportunities in education and employment increases women's dependency on men.²⁵ Where women lack legal protection or cannot own property, their dependence is even greater.

31. According to UNICEF, the estimated number of girls and boys affected by AIDS, who have lost one or both parents to AIDS, increased from 6 million in 2000 to about 15 million in 2005.²⁶ According to ILO, child labourers are at heightened risk of abuse and HIV infection because of the conditions under which they work. Given that girls are at a greater risk than boys of forced prostitution (see A/61/299, para. 30), they are particularly at risk of becoming HIV-positive.²⁷

32. A multi-country study on the HIV vulnerabilities of Asian migrant women in Arab States²⁸ recommended actions to mitigate stigma and discrimination endured by migrant women living with HIV and protect their right to work; encourage safe and informed migration; encourage Governments to recognize domestic work as

²⁴ UNAIDS, 2008, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

²⁵ <http://www.unaids.org/en/PolicyAndPractice/KeyPopulations/WomenGirls/default.asp> (accessed on 25/11/2008).

²⁶ UNICEF contribution to the report (2008).

²⁷ ILO contribution to the report (2008).

²⁸ The study was undertaken by the UNDP Regional Centre in Colombo in partnership with UNAIDS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNIFEM and Coordination of Action Research and Mobility (CARAM) Asia and Caritas Lebanon.

professional work protected by labour laws and standards, regularize hiring agencies and bring recruitment processes under the purview of the law.

33. The IFAD East and Southern Africa Division supported the Rural HIV/AIDS Impact Mitigation Project in the Kagera Region in North-West United Republic of Tanzania to increase the capacity of vulnerable groups to meet their basic needs and to improve their overall quality of life. The project addressed women's empowerment through enhancing their economic, political and legal status.²⁹

34. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Women and Wealth Project, a regional pilot initiative in Asia, supported the socio-economic empowerment of women living with and affected by HIV/AIDS through the development of small-scale social enterprises. The project developed sustainable social enterprises to provide employment and a sustainable flow of financial resources for the HIV-positive women's groups. In the second phase, the project implemented a microcredit programme specifically designed for people living with HIV.

35. A community outreach education programme implemented in the UNDP Human Development Initiative villages in Myanmar included volunteer women (aged 25 and above) and girls (aged 15-24) trained to conduct outreach education. The project encouraged HIV-positive women to take on bigger roles in outreach education, which addressed gender-related vulnerabilities of women and girls, and hired four HIV-positive women to oversee the outreach programmes in the field.

1. Measures to address violence against women

36. Violence and the threat of violence increases women's risk of contracting HIV. Studies suggest three times higher risk of HIV among women who have experienced gender-based violence than among those who have not.³⁰ Fear of violence prevents women from accessing HIV/AIDS information, being tested, disclosing their HIV status, accessing services, including for the prevention of HIV transmission to infants, and receiving treatment and counselling, even when they know they have been infected.³¹

37. A number of countries formulated strategies to address the issue of violence against women in relation to HIV/AIDS (Brazil, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Lebanon and Qatar). The Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica partnered with the Government and non-governmental agencies to conduct training of community members, including youth and adults on the effects of violence on women and girls, on sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. In 2007, Brazil launched its National Pact to Face Violence against Women. This Pact consolidates policies to combat violence against women and enforce criminalization of domestic violence; promotes sexual and reproductive rights of women; addresses the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases on women; addresses sexual exploitation and trafficking in women; and promotes the human rights of imprisoned women. The Republic of Korea and Morocco provided information on initiatives to prevent violence against women.

²⁹ IFAD contribution to the report (2008).

³⁰ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

³¹ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, backgrounder on "Violence against women and AIDS" available from http://data.unaids.org/GCWA/GCWA_BG_Violence_en.pdf.

38. Qatar established the Qatari Institution for the Protection of Women and Children to protect women, including those living with HIV/AIDS, from all types of violence. Lebanon created over 128 centres to spread awareness among the youth on sexual and reproductive health, HIV and gender-based violence, prevention services.

39. Several United Nations entities addressed the links between violence against women and the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS. The inter-agency United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, managed by UNIFEM, provided grants for projects aimed at increasing understanding of interventions which can reduce violence against women and girls, their risk of HIV, and violence resulting from stigma and discrimination.³²

40. The UNAIDS secretariat has coordinated a programme on "the United Nations system-wide work programme on scaling up HIV/AIDS services for populations of humanitarian concern", which focuses on addressing gender-based violence. Activities include strengthening and expanding strategic information on gender-based violence as related to HIV, including in the area of food security and livelihoods; training in the use of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings; and expanding gender-based violence service delivery.

41. The links between violence and HIV were addressed in a regional UNIFEM programme assisting National AIDS Councils in the Caribbean. In training workshops, government officials and gender experts reviewed the gender implications of national AIDS strategies and identified sexual violence and lower economic status as the factors that sharply curtail women's abilities to protect themselves. In Barbados, the most recent strategic plan recognized that low-income single women were among those most vulnerable to HIV and aims to improve prevention and testing services for this group and expand awareness through new courses on human sexuality and gender relations in schools.

42. UNIFEM supported, in collaboration with UNFPA and civil society partners, Development Connections, an organization that works with women victims of violence and HIV/AIDS, to create and implement the training course "Empowerment, HIV and violence against women" in Latin America and the Caribbean. The course strengthens professional competencies within governmental and non-governmental organizations to integrate HIV/AIDS and violence against women in prevention, treatment and care interventions, as well as to respond to emerging policy issues. The online course is currently being adapted for the global level and will be launched in 2009.

43. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat created a special website for the Secretary-General's global campaign to end violence against women, which among other things, raised the links between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

2. Female-controlled methods of HIV prevention

44. Comprehensive HIV prevention is essential to halt and to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS. Many women have difficulty negotiating abstinence, fidelity or condom

³² For projects supported in 2007, see http://www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=561.

use with their partners. Female-controlled methods allow women to guard themselves against sexually transmitted diseases. Female condoms can help to protect women even if their partners refuse to use a male condom, but they are usually more expensive than male condoms and are poorly marketed.³³

45. Several Member States encouraged research on female-controlled methods and provided support to the development of vaccines and microbicides (Belgium, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands). In 2006, Canada hosted the XVI International AIDS Conference, at which participants stressed the need for continued research on female-controlled prevention methods such as microbicides. The Netherlands provided financial assistance (€3 million) to the International Partnership on Microbicides, which is developing a gel that women can use to protect themselves against HIV.

46. UNFPA assisted in the procurement of male and female condoms and provided financial and technical support to countries enrolled in the Global Condom Initiative, including 22 countries in Africa, 23 in the Caribbean and 6 in Asia. Through strengthened efforts and partnerships, UNFPA increased female condom distribution from 13.9 million in 2005 to 25.9 million in 2007. Remaining challenges include estimating quantities of condoms needed, overcoming social taboos, ensuring a sustainable supply of condoms and making condoms more affordable.

3. Mother-to-child transmission

47. There is a 15-30 per cent risk of HIV transmission from an HIV-positive mother to her child during pregnancy and delivery, which rises to 45 per cent with prolonged breastfeeding.³⁴ Antiretroviral treatment for the mother and child reduces this risk significantly.³⁴ Many countries made progress in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS. The percentage of pregnant women living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries that received antiretrovirals to prevent transmission to their children increased from 9 per cent in 2004 to 33 per cent in 2007.³⁵ However, this fell short of the 80 per cent target in the Declaration of Commitment (see General Assembly resolution S-26/2, para. 54). Member States reported on their efforts to expand access to services to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and maintain low levels of mother-to-child-transmission rates (Austria, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Lebanon, Paraguay, the Russian Federation, Senegal and Thailand).

48. In Germany, a multilingual DVD guide on motherhood and HIV/AIDS was developed for women living with HIV. To prevent mother-to-child transmission, the Russian Federation developed measures, including instruction materials for students in medical faculties and providing special courses for experts; holding seminars and organizing conferences; and preparing and issuing guidance and recommendations for practitioners and handbooks for people affected by AIDS. Austria provided access to HIV-testing and treatment, including programmes to prevent mother-to-child transmission, free of charge. Thailand integrated the mother-to-child-transmission prevention project into the maternal health-care system. Paraguay

³³ The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS (2006), "Increase women's control over HIV prevention: Fight AIDS", Issue No. 4, available from http://data.unaids.org/pub/BriefingNote/2006/20060530_FS_Women%27s%20HIV%20Prevention%20Control_en.pdf.

³⁴ UNAIDS, 2008, op. cit., p. 121

³⁵ Ibid., p. 124.

appropriated funds in its national budget for the provision of breast-milk substitutes for HIV-positive mothers. Ecuador and Senegal provided milk substitutes to newborns of HIV-positive mothers.

49. UNICEF provided support to preventing mother-to-child transmission activities in 97 countries in 2007, including through technical assistance in policy and planning, communications, training and the provision of drugs and other supplies. ILO integrated prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV into occupational safety and health policies.

50. The International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), funded through an international airline tax, played a significant role in scaling up paediatric treatment programmes and services to prevent mother-to-child transmission. During 2007-2008, UNITAID is expected to provide US\$ 20.8 million for the procurement and delivery of high-quality HIV drugs, diagnostics and related commodities for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission for a period of 24 months to Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Malawi, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

51. Despite increases in pregnant women's access to services, limited human resources and infrastructure, as well as weak maternal and child health-care services, hinder progress towards reaching the target of 80 per cent of pregnant women having access to antenatal care, information, counselling and other HIV services by 2010 (*ibid.*). Increase in investment in services is critical to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV to meet agreed targets in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment. While some countries have enacted or are considering legislation which criminalizes mother-to-child transmission, public health measures, such as counselling and social support, would be more appropriate to deal with the rare cases of pregnant women or mothers with HIV who refuse treatment.³⁶

4. Women's equal access to treatment

52. Even though progress has been made, women's access to treatment falls short of actual needs. An estimated 3 million people in low- and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral drugs in 2007 — 31 per cent of those who needed the medications.³⁷ Antiretroviral drug coverage for women is equal to that of men worldwide, but women may face barriers in adhering to treatment regimens.³⁸ Some Member States reported on actions taken to increase access to treatment. Jamaica expanded HIV testing as an attempt to scale up access to antiretroviral treatment. Côte d'Ivoire and Peru provided free antiretroviral treatment for women and men. The Russian Federation, together with non-governmental organizations, implemented programmes to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people living with AIDS and improve adherence of people living with HIV to antiretroviral treatment regimes.

53. The UNAIDS secretariat also reported that women were underrepresented as participants in clinical trials for various interventions, including for HIV vaccines. A significant challenge for women and adolescent girls was exercising their autonomy in participating in trials. The process of enrolment, securing informed consent, and

³⁶ UNAIDS Policy Brief, "Criminalization of HIV Transmission", 2008.

³⁷ UNAIDS, 2008, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

³⁸ Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

overall participation in clinical trials are largely biased towards men. Gender-sensitive approaches are critical when designing consent and recruitment procedures and risk-reduction interventions in HIV clinical trials. The UNAIDS secretariat worked towards increasing women's representation in all HIV clinical trials and integrating sexual and reproductive health into clinical trials.¹⁴

D. Awareness-raising

54. Member States provided information on awareness campaigns aimed at youth, women and men (Austria, Côte d'Ivoire, Germany, Malta and Qatar). In the Netherlands, HIV/AIDS education for men and boys was incorporated within sex education classes at schools and disseminated through HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns. The Qatar National Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention organized five awareness-raising workshops between October 2007 and June 2008. In Malta, teachers, nurses, midwives, health professionals and psychologists were trained on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and education. The Japanese Stop AIDS Directorate of Operations, headed by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, conducted public awareness activities in collaboration with autonomous bodies and non-governmental organizations.

55. In 2007, the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour incorporated training, awareness-raising and capacity-building targeted at men into its projects in Central American countries.

56. In 2007, the UNAIDS secretariat, together with OHCHR and UNDP, launched the *Handbook on HIV and Human Rights for National Human Rights Institutions*.³⁹ The handbook highlighted the fact that protecting the rights of women and girls was crucial in preventing HIV transmission and lessening the impact of the epidemic on women. It provided specific guidance to national human rights institutions on how they could address the differential impact of HIV on women and men, and protect and promote the rights of women and girls.

57. According to UNAIDS, survey data from 64 countries indicates that, in 2008, about 38 per cent of females and 40 per cent of males aged 15-24 had comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS and how to avoid transmission. This is an improvement from 2005,⁴⁰ but still below the goal of ensuring comprehensive HIV/AIDS knowledge in 95 per cent of young people by 2010 (see General Assembly resolution 26/2, annex, para. 53).

58. Several Member States reported on awareness-raising campaigns that were undertaken to target young women and girls, given their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Paraguay's Secretariat of State for Women developed an awareness campaign that focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention among young women. In Germany, the Federal Centre for Health Education targeted youth in awareness campaigns, particularly young women aged 12-20. Similarly, the Austrian Government has implemented awareness campaigns targeted at young girls. In Switzerland, the Federal Office of Public Health in collaboration with the Swiss organization, Help against HIV/AIDS, published free information brochures on HIV/AIDS specifically aimed at women.

³⁹ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.07.XIV.12.

⁴⁰ UNAIDS, 2008, op. cit., p. 98.

59. UNESCO implemented peer education initiatives to build young women's capacities and knowledge on HIV/AIDS and reproductive and sexual health issues. UNESCO developed a series of evidence-based papers on school-based sex education on relationships and HIV/AIDS. It also developed gender-responsive interactive and multimedia tools and educational games on HIV/AIDS for young women and men.

60. ESCAP implemented a project on "Reducing drug use and delinquency among youth in the Greater Mekong Subregion", namely in China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam, to establish more effective, comprehensive and integrated health systems to reduce drug abuse and HIV/AIDS among young women and men. Particular attention was given to raising awareness and providing counselling for young women and girls in compulsory drug treatment centres and community settings. Policymakers and other stakeholders have been made more aware of how drug use and HIV/AIDS affect girls and young women differently from boys and young men, and of how policies and practices that reflect such differences need to be put in place.

E. Collaboration

61. Member States reported on in-country collaboration among relevant stakeholders to address the HIV/AIDS issue. In order to strengthen the institutional capacity for the development of a women and HIV/AIDS component within Municipal and Provincial Offices for Women, the Dominican Republic established a coordinating committee comprised of representatives from the Government and non-governmental and civil society organizations. Thailand's National Committee for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Alleviation is comprised of various stakeholders and includes girls, young women and sex workers, who serve as board members in some projects funded by the Global Fund. The Thai Women and AIDS Task Force formed in 2002 aims to empower women and create a forum for collective action against HIV/AIDS that integrates gender perspectives.

62. Some Member States have entered into partnerships with other countries. For example, Australia works with partner countries in the Asia-Pacific on programmes which aim to improve women's and girls' access to education, prevent and treat HIV/AIDS and reduce violence against women. The Australian Agency for International Development supported networking among national women's groups throughout Papua New Guinea, and has intensified efforts to change male attitudes on violence against women. Brazil hosted the first ministerial meeting on policies for women and HIV/AIDS, which brought together ministers in charge of women's affairs from Portuguese-speaking countries, as well as representatives of health authorities and civil society, to develop an agenda for South-South cooperation.

63. Several Member States collaborated with civil society to address the HIV/AIDS crisis. Under the Federal Initiative to Address HIV/AIDS in Canada, the Government supported 26 projects led by community-based organizations to deliver services to women living with, or at risk for, HIV/AIDS. Through the AIDS Community Action Program, Canada provided support for community-based organizations targeted at women. Similarly, in Austria, the Government partnered with women's organizations, especially those targeting migrant women and migrant sex workers. In the Philippines, the Social Technology Bureau of the Department of

Social Welfare and Development provided assistance to cases referred by Women Plus, a support group for HIV-positive women. The Government of Canada allocated CAD\$ 70,000 to Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association which conducted HIV/AIDS awareness activities for the Inuit population. In Serbia, the non-governmental organization "Woman" was established with assistance from the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to support women affected by HIV/AIDS. Lebanon and Senegal also supported women's organizations that work on HIV/AIDS programming. In Switzerland, the Government-supported organization, PLANes, expanded women's access to family planning and specific HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, including for groups such as sex workers and women migrants in Switzerland.

64. Few examples of public-private partnerships were provided. The Canadian HIV Vaccine Initiative, an innovative public-private collaboration between the Government of Canada and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, aims to accelerate global efforts to develop safe, effective, affordable and globally accessible HIV vaccines. The initiative is committed to expanding access to these vaccines for all, including women, in low and middle-income countries.

65. Several examples of programme-level collaboration on HIV/AIDS between United Nations entities and Member States were provided. In Jamaica, the Bureau of Women's Affairs, in partnership with the National Family Planning Board and UNFPA, has embarked on extensive promotion programmes to improve the use of both male and female condoms. UNICEF supported the Government of Yemen on interventions focused on HIV/AIDS prevention among adolescents and young people, including provision of gender-sensitive information and services. The Philippines Government, in partnership with UNDP, provided institutionalized support and services for the prevention, management and alleviation of HIV/AIDS. Argentina held a national consultation on sex work and HIV/AIDS in collaboration with UNFPA and UNAIDS. Serbia collaborated with UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNIFEM, the United Nations Theme Group on Gender, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to protect the human rights of all affected by the AIDS pandemic, including women and girls. Denmark supported national and international partners, such as UNFPA, to strengthen the integration of HIV prevention efforts with reproductive health services.

66. ILO collaborated with its constituents and other United Nations entities, including UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM and WHO. Projects included, among others, gender-specific research on strengthening HIV/AIDS policies and programmes in the world of work in Pakistan and integrating gender and HIV/AIDS in information and advocacy materials in Kyrgyzstan.

67. The ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour collaborates with Governments, employers and workers' organizations in Uganda and Zambia to prevent HIV/AIDS-affected boys and girls from being exploited as child labour and dropping out of school and to rescue those children already engaged in worst forms of child labour.

68. In response to calls for rights-based delivery of sexual and reproductive health services for people living with HIV, UNFPA, in collaboration with WHO, developed rights-based guidance on advocacy, health systems and policy aspects of sexual and reproductive health for people living with HIV.

F. Coordination

69. There are a number of AIDS planning, coordination and funding mechanisms. At the global level, UNAIDS brings together the efforts and resources of 10 United Nations system organizations⁴¹ and the Secretariat to help mount a multisectoral response to the epidemic, with the engagement of Governments, civil society and development partners. UNAIDS provides technical support to countries in the development and implementation of their national AIDS plans. At the country level, the Joint United Nations Teams on AIDS assist national AIDS coordination bodies and planning processes.

70. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, launched in 2004 by UNAIDS, is a coalition of civil society groups, networks of women living with HIV and the United Nations system partners who work primarily at the global level to highlight the effects of AIDS on women and girls, to stimulate concrete and effective action to prevent the spread of HIV, and to advocate for improved AIDS programming for women and girls. The Coalition works with partners to mobilize leadership and political will in addressing factors that put girls and women at risk of HIV and in removing impediments to women's equitable access to HIV services and programmes.

71. An interagency coordination group, including the UNAIDS secretariat, the UNAIDS Co-sponsors and UNIFEM, was established to enhance coordination and alignment of the United Nations system action on gender and HIV. The group promotes country-level action to effectively address gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS, as requested by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

72. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has developed a new gender strategy of the Fund, which will be presented for consideration to its Board in November 2008. The strategy aims to strengthen gender expertise at all levels of the Fund, make gender sensitivity an important criteria for proposal review, heighten the representation of women and require monitoring and evaluation data disaggregated by sex and age. The Fund also published a fact sheet on ways to incorporate gender perspectives into Global Fund proposals in March 2008.

G. Research, data collection and development of methodologies and tools

73. A number of countries reported on their research and data collection initiatives. National population-based surveys, which collect HIV prevalence measures for both women and men have, for example, been conducted in 30 countries in the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia.⁴² The level of disaggregation of HIV/AIDS data reported varied across countries. Some countries disaggregated by sex, age and marital status (Lebanon and Serbia); some disaggregated by age and sex (Albania, Senegal and Serbia); while others reported disaggregation by sex only (Argentina, Belgium and Canada). Data for Switzerland was disaggregated by sex, age, marital status, mode of transmission and nationality.

⁴¹ ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Bank, WFP and WHO.

⁴² UNAIDS, 2008, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

Côte d'Ivoire's survey on HIV/AIDS indicators included data disaggregated by sex, age, educational levels, marital status, size and composition of the household.

74. Canada is developing population-specific HIV/AIDS status reports to collate current evidence on HIV/AIDS among key populations, including women. In Canada, the National HIV/AIDS Knowledge Broker system provided national partners with current information to help strengthen front-line HIV/AIDS prevention, diagnosis, care, treatment and extended support to programmes.

75. HIV/AIDS surveillance in the 53 countries of the WHO European Region is coordinated by EuroHIV, a network supported by the European Commission. Malta indicated that it had collaborated with EuroHIV surveillance network for a number of years and provided information about HIV/AIDS cases, including information on sex, age, mode of transmission, year of HIV/AIDS diagnosis, stage of disease and year of death. The Netherlands reported a surveillance system which provided data on the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. The German Federal Government initiated epidemiological surveys at regular intervals where data on HIV/AIDS, including on gender dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, was gathered and published biannually.

76. In Peru, the ongoing National Demographic and Health Survey included a questionnaire on HIV/AIDS, which covered questions on women's awareness of the disease, their primary source of information, steps to avoid contracting HIV/AIDS, and whether they knew that the HIV/AIDS virus could be transmitted from an infected mother to child.

77. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East Health Department established an HIV/AIDS epidemic surveillance system to monitor the epidemic among the refugee community and host countries' population of the Agency's five areas of operations.

78. Several United Nations entities have developed guidelines and tools to support Governments in addressing different gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. The ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work provides guidelines to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the framework of the promotion of decent work. It covers key principles, such as the recognition of HIV/AIDS as a workplace issue, non-discrimination in employment, gender equality, screening and confidentiality, social dialogue, prevention and care and support, as the basis for addressing the epidemic in the workplace.

79. The WHO tool on "Integrating gender into HIV/AIDS programmes: tool to improve responsiveness to women's needs" assists programme managers and service providers in the health sector to integrate gender perspectives into HIV/AIDS programmes and service delivery. The Toolkit for Mainstreaming HIV and AIDS in the Education Sector, developed by UNAIDS, includes a tool on "Mainstreaming gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights in education sector responses to HIV and AIDS" targeted at staff from development cooperation agencies, including both development and humanitarian-oriented multilateral and bilateral agencies as well as civil society organizations.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

80. Member States and the United Nations system continued to address the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS and the disproportionate impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on women and girls. Many States addressed the concerns and needs of women and girls in their national policy and legislative responses and others took measures to address HIV/AIDS in their national action plans on gender equality.

81. Progress in achieving the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010 requires that existing HIV/AIDS policies, strategies, resource allocation and programmes be reviewed and adapted to ensure that they contribute to empowering women and reducing their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Efforts are needed to expand access to services, such as education and information, sexual and reproductive health, antenatal care, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, as well as antiretroviral therapy and microbicides.

82. Governments and other stakeholders should take all necessary measures to create an enabling environment to empower women and girls to reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, including through strengthening women's economic independence and ensuring their full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

83. Governments should strengthen measures to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional and customary practices, abuse and rape, battering and trafficking in women and girls, which aggravate the conditions underlying women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. These measures should include, inter alia, the enactment and enforcement of laws and public awareness campaigns on violence against women and girls. Efforts are needed to eliminate the stigma, fear and violence that prevent women from taking advantage of HIV services.

84. Increased resources are required to fund programmes that reduce women's vulnerability. Direct funding channels to women's organizations, especially women living with HIV, are essential to strengthen their capacities to promote and support extension of HIV services to women at all levels.

85. Governments and other stakeholders should improve access to and sustained uptake of HIV prevention and treatment services, and address the factors that hinder women's use of such services. Women living with HIV should continue to receive treatment after the risk of transmission to their children has ended.

86. Investment in female-controlled methods, including microbicide development and the female condom, should be scaled up. The supply and marketing of affordable female condoms should be increased to ensure they become an accessible, effective and widely used HIV prevention option.

87. Women, including those living with HIV, remain underrepresented in HIV/AIDS decision-making processes and mechanisms at national level. Efforts must be made to increase their effective participation and influence on all decision-making bodies.



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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

Joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides a review of the implementation of the 2008 joint workplan of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also contains the joint workplan for 2009.

* E/CN.6/2009/1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995, Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, and Human Rights Council resolution 6/30 of 14 December 2007. A joint workplan is prepared annually by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The workplan for 2008 is contained in document A/HRC/7/52-E/CN.6/2008/8.

2. Cooperation between OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued in 2008 with the goal of achieving equality between women and men and the promotion and protection of women's human rights. The major activities that were carried out jointly are outlined below, as are plans for joint activities for 2009.

II. Review of the implementation of the joint workplan for 2008

3. During the implementation of the current joint workplan, the exchange of information continued between OHCHR, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Division and OHCHR continued to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, especially the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. The Division and OHCHR participated in the seventh session of the Inter-Agency Network from 19 to 21 February 2008 in New York, contributing to discussions on all items on the agenda. Both entities participated in several of the task forces of the Inter-Agency Network, including its task force on violence against women, co-convened by the Division and the United Nations Population Fund. OHCHR also contributed to the inventory of activities of the United Nations system on violence against women, compiled twice yearly by the Division as part of the activities of the task force on violence against women.

4. Both entities continued to participate in the Inter-Agency Cooperation Group against Trafficking in Persons, chaired by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as in decision-making concerning grants by the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The Division and OHCHR also continued collaboration within the context of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, specifically in the cluster on the advancement of women, which is co-convened by the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Economic Commission for Africa. Both entities also participate in a working group chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women on strengthening United Nations work on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

5. The Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and an OHCHR staff member working with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences participated in an expert group meeting in Vienna from 26 to 28 May 2008, co-organized by the Division for

the Advancement of Women and the Office on Drugs and Crime, on good practices in legislation on violence against women.

6. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR collaborated to ensure the smooth transfer as of 1 January 2008 of responsibilities for servicing the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to OHCHR, in accordance with the decision of the Secretary-General. A staff member of the Division at the General Service level worked with OHCHR staff to support the Committee at its fortieth session, in Geneva. The Division established a link to the OHCHR website, referring users to that site for information pertaining to the fortieth and subsequent sessions of the Committee.

7. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to support the work of human rights treaty bodies and implementation of the major international human rights instruments, including through exchange of information and dissemination of information about the human rights treaty system. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women addressed the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on 30 June 2008 during the forty-first session, held in New York. The Division provided inputs to documentation prepared by OHCHR for the Committee, and in particular to reports on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/2008/II/4 and CEDAW/C/2008/III/4).

8. Both the Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR continued to update their databases and websites. The Division continued to provide information on its website about developments in the area of women's human rights, and in particular enhanced its website in relation to violence against women. OHCHR enhanced accessibility to women's rights information by redesigning a more user-friendly website.

9. OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women, respectively, convened a number of meetings, including training seminars and other capacity-building activities, to support implementation of human rights treaties and follow-up to concluding observations and comments at the national level. The Division for the Advancement of Women continued to participate as a member of the Reference Group for the Action 2 global programme on strengthening United Nations support for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide, convened by OHCHR.

10. The Division for the Advancement of Women continued its interaction with special procedures mandate holders. In particular, the Division maintained contact and exchanged information with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, in the follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and General Assembly resolution 61/143 on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

11. Collaboration in support of intergovernmental bodies continued. In March 2008, the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women delivered a statement to the Human Rights Council at its seventh session. In February 2008, the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women addressed the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session. The

Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences also attended the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

12. Coordination of the preparation of reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies continued. OHCHR provided inputs to the reports of the Secretary-General on trafficking in women and girls (A/63/215) and on eliminating rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations, including in conflict and related situations (A/63/216 and Corr.1), which were submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. OHCHR provided inputs to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (E/CN.6/2008/6), and on ending female genital mutilation (E/CN.6/2008/3), which were submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-second session. OHCHR contributed to the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system, submitted to the Economic and Social Council (see E/2008/53). The Division contributed information on trafficking in women and girls to a report by OHCHR on trafficking in persons, in response to Human Rights Council resolution 8/12.

III. Joint workplan for 2009

A. Promotion of the human rights of women and mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the field of human rights

13. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to implement its mandated responsibilities with regard to women's human rights in follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and other relevant mandates. The Division will cooperate with OHCHR and exchange information of relevance in support of the work of human rights treaty bodies and enhanced mainstreaming of gender perspectives in their work.

14. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to support the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the President of the Human Rights Council in each other's sessions and the participation of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in the sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

15. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will continue to seek input and provide comments for reports to be submitted to intergovernmental bodies and special procedures, as relevant. The Division will continue to monitor progress with respect to integrating gender perspectives in the work of intergovernmental and expert bodies and exchange information with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences or other mandate holders, as relevant.

16. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will exchange information and cooperate on follow-up to any actions the Commission on the Status of Women will take at its fifty-third session as well as any actions the Human Rights Council will take in 2009, as relevant. The Division and OHCHR will also

exchange information and seek to collaborate in assisting the Human Rights Council to integrate gender perspectives in its work, including during panel discussions and side events, and OHCHR will regularly provide information about the Council's work programme and related documentation.

B. Technical cooperation, advisory services and meetings

17. The Division for the Advancement of Women and OHCHR will improve early information exchange and coordination on technical cooperation activities, in particular by sharing plans for such activities, and cooperate whenever possible in such activities. Staff from each entity will be invited to contribute to and participate in relevant workshops, as appropriate. OHCHR will also invite the Division to participate in OHCHR Annual Consultations with heads of field presences.

18. The Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to participate as a member of the reference group for the Action 2 global programme on strengthening United Nations support for the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

C. Awareness-raising and outreach

19. The Division will continue to provide information on its website about developments in the area of women's human rights, including a link to the WomenWatch portal.

D. Inter-agency cooperation

20. OHCHR and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue to cooperate within the framework of inter-agency mechanisms, including the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality under the leadership of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.



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Commission on the Status of Women

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Communications concerning the status of women

Future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report compiles additional or updated written views of Member States on the future work of the Working Group on Communications of the Commission on the Status of Women.



I. Introduction

1. By its decision 52/101, entitled "Future work of the Working Group on Communications", the Commission on the Status of Women decided to postpone its consideration of the future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women until its fifty-third session. It requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the future work of the Working Group compiling additional or updated written views of Member States received since the preparation of the previous report on the subject (E/CN.6/2004/11 and Add.1 and 2).

2. As at 29 September, the following nine States had responded to the Secretary-General's request for views in accordance with decision 52/101: Azerbaijan, France (on behalf of the European Union), Egypt, Lebanon, Madagascar, Morocco, Russian Federation, Switzerland and Thailand. Those views are reflected below.

II. Written views received from Member States on the future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women

3. Azerbaijan and Morocco had no objection to postponing the consideration of the future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women until the fifty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

4. Egypt stated that the focus of the Commission on the Status of Women should be on improving the working methods of the Working Group on Communications within its established mandate rather than exploring new mechanisms. Since the 2004 report of the Secretary-General, there had been no developments to warrant transforming the Working Group into a new complaints mechanism. Such a change would result in undesirable duplication, fragmentation and inconsistency, given that other mechanisms for dealing with complaints submitted by women already existed, including the mechanism of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

5. Egypt was of the view that patterns of violations of women's rights in various regions should continue to be studied without singling out any particular State. Egypt was opposed to adopting resolutions on specific human rights situations because it believed that cooperation and constructive dialogue was the basis for improving, enhancing and protecting human rights generally and women's rights in particular.

6. Egypt believed that the working methods of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat should be developed and improved with a view to raising awareness of its activities as a body that received complaints relating to women's issues rather than receiving grievances relating to women through other United Nations mechanisms, such as the confidential 1503 procedure of the Human Rights Council.

7. The European Union noted that, since the 2004 report of the Secretary-General on the future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women, the Working Group had continued to face the same difficulties in carrying out its mandate. The European Union considered, however, that the mandate of discerning trends in terms of injustice or discriminatory practices towards women in

the world and of producing recommendations remained of interest. It was thus important to enable the Working Group to carry out its mandate in an efficient manner. In the opinion of the European Union, improvements to the mechanism should focus on the following aspects: (a) it would be suitable for the secretariat of the complaints procedure of the Human Rights Council to transmit to the Commission on the Status of Women complaints relating to the status of women that had been addressed to the Human Rights Council, in accordance with the established practice between the 1503 procedure and the communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women; (b) the secretariat should take measures to facilitate the collection of complaints, for example by making the mechanism better known to the persons it concerned, or even by approaching other sources such as treaty bodies or special procedures, taking into account the respective mandates of those diverse mechanisms; (c) the terms of the members of the Working Group on Communications should be extended to two years so as to enhance their expertise, as was suggested by the Secretary-General in his report (E/CN.6/2004/11); in the same spirit, the passing of information to successive members of the Working Group should also be encouraged; and (d) above all, the members of the Working Group should be encouraged to make more use of their prerogative to make recommendations and the Commission on the Status of Women should strive each year to follow up in one form or another on the report of the Working Group on Communications. The European Union felt that it would be important to reinforce the links between the work of the Working Group on Communications and the work of the Commission on the Status of Women.

8. The Russian Federation viewed the communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women as not having been very effective. It had not assisted the Commission in identifying trends and practices relating to the violation of the basic rights of women and thus had failed to assist the Commission in developing policies and guidelines to improve the status of women.

9. The Russian Federation added that the existing practice of information and communication exchange between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights (now, the Human Rights Council) had no legal basis and led to unreasonable duplication of work by different organs of the United Nations system. A communication should only be considered once under the most appropriate procedure. The Russian Federation considered it to be unacceptable to request a Member State to respond twice to an identical complaint. Furthermore, of 185 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 90 States recognized the authority of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to consider communications and undertake follow-up activities. Consequently, the operation of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women had already led to additional duplication of functions in relation to the gender perspective.

10. The Russian Federation thought that the future work of the Working Group on Communications needed to be considered within the context of the ongoing consideration of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence on Gender, a discussion that was far from completion. As it was not clear how the gender perspective would be changed, it seemed reasonable to postpone a decision on the future work of the Working Group on Communications until the final stage of reform was reached.

11. Switzerland had joined the United Nations in 2002, and had not yet had the opportunity to become a member of the Commission on the Status of Women, which made it difficult to provide detailed comments on the past or future work of the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women, all the more so as the communications procedure was confidential. As an active observer of the Commission, however, Switzerland intended to fully support that important procedure, which not only had to be maintained, but also made more efficient. Indeed, not all the Member States of the United Nations were parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and even less were parties to the Optional Protocol with its communications procedure.

12. In the opinion of Switzerland, the mandate given to the Commission by the Economic and Social Council was clear: all communications that "reveal a consistent pattern of reliably attested injustices and discriminatory practices against women" fell within the scope of the confidential communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women and, consequently, must be considered by the Working Group. As the number of communications submitted to the Working Group was limited compared with other United Nations communications procedures, such as the confidential complaints procedure of the Human Rights Council, the fact that the procedure existed should be widely publicized, and the number of communications received should be increased by widening the possible sources of communications, while avoiding duplication.

13. Switzerland suggested that the Commission on the Status of Women should use the confidential complaints procedure of the Human Rights Council (the 1503 procedure was revised in 2007 following the establishment of the Human Rights Council) as a source of inspiration. One positive development of that procedure, which might serve to inspire the Commission, was that authors of communications were informed of decisions taken at all stages of the procedure, i.e. by the Working Group, the Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

14. In conclusion, Switzerland hoped that next year, at its fifty-third session, the Commission on the Status of Women would consider its confidential complaints procedure on the basis of the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his 2004 report and in the light of observations made by Member States.

15. Thailand pointed out that there were a number of working groups with a mandate to consider communications dealing with human rights, such as the Working Group on Communications of the Human Rights Council and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Therefore, and because the United Nations was in the process of reform, the Working Group on Communications on the Status of Women should avoid duplicating the work of other bodies. Thailand felt that a clear definition and delineation of duties of the three bodies concerned would avoid duplication in the United Nations system as well as for the Member States involved.

III. Written views received from Member States

16. Lebanon proposed that a report should be submitted on women's political participation. It also proposed that the problem of early marriage should be added to the agenda item on forced marriage and that the Government of Lebanon should be supplied with all reports.

17. Madagascar described steps that it had taken for gender equality and the advancement of women in various fields within the context of its international and regional commitments, including decision-making, reproductive health, education and the economy.

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**Follow-up to Economic and Social Council
resolutions and decisions**

**Letter dated 3 December 2008 from the President of the Economic
and Social Council to the Chairperson of the Commission on the
Status of Women**

The 2008 session of the Economic and Social Council was truly an historic occasion; it implemented the vision of the 2005 World Summit in its entirety and firmly established the Council not only as a central mechanism for the follow-up to the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and summits but also as the principal forum on international development cooperation.

It was remarkable to see the holding of the very first Development Cooperation Forum. The Forum, indeed, constitutes one of the central pillars of the new, revitalized Economic and Social Council. I believe that we made significant strides in positioning the Council as the principal forum for global dialogue and policy review on the effectiveness and coherence of international development cooperation. The representative global character of the Forum provides it with a clear comparative advantage in reviewing progress in scaling up mutual accountability and aid effectiveness.

The exchange of information and lessons learned at the national voluntary presentations during the annual ministerial review were, once again, encouraging and significant. In particular, the participation by developed countries in 2008 demonstrated the versatility of these presentations, which was lauded by all. It is a step forward in promoting accountability in the fulfilment of international commitments in development cooperation.

Developing countries shared their unique experiences in development and agreed on one common theme — that the eradication of poverty can only be achieved by pursuing development that is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable. Volunteering developed countries, for their part, acknowledged the gaps in their development cooperation strategies while highlighting successes with their

* E/CN.6/2009/1.



development partners. It is heartening to note that the momentum has continued and that we already have 11 countries volunteering for 2009.

The Economic and Social Council was able to contribute to the ongoing efforts to realize the goal of sustainable development by bringing different stakeholders together, by addressing emerging challenges, such as climate change, rising food and oil prices and the loss of biodiversity and, most importantly, by adopting the ministerial declaration. The Council's role in peacebuilding and post-conflict development has been recognized, and it is building its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission by engaging in an informal discussion on how its work can enrich that of the Commission.

With regard to the other outcomes of the Council's substantive session of July 2008, I would like to highlight some of the important proposals made by the Council, which are of relevance to the functional commissions. A list of the resolutions adopted by the Council specifically calling for action by the functional commissions is attached for your reference (see annex).

Among the resolutions listed I wish to draw your attention, in particular, to Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/29 on the role of the Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcome of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. In that resolution, the Council, *inter alia*, recognized the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation between the Council and its functional commissions, the regional commissions and other subsidiary bodies so as to allow the Council to carry out its crucial role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination more effectively, encouraged the functional commissions to continue to explore ways to engage agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system more systematically in their work within their respective mandates and requested the functional commissions, the regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Council, in accordance with their mandates, as appropriate, to contribute to the annual ministerial review and to the Development Cooperation Forum, in the context of their respective annual workplans, taking into account their specificities.

I would greatly appreciate it if the issues raised above could be brought to the attention of your functional commission for consideration and action, and wish to thank you for your continued assistance and collaboration in this regard.

(Signed) Léo Mérorès

Annex

Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2008 requesting follow-up

A. Resolutions requesting follow-up by all functional commissions

<i>Resolution number</i>	<i>Title</i>
2008/18	Promoting full employment and decent work for all
2008/20	Further promotion of equalization of opportunities by, for and with, persons with disabilities and protection of their human rights
2008/21	Mainstreaming disability in the development agenda
2008/29	Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16

B. Resolutions requesting follow-up by the Commission on the Status of Women

<i>Resolution number</i>	<i>Title</i>
2008/11	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

C. Resolutions calling for action by all relevant United Nations bodies/entities of the United Nations system

<i>Resolution number</i>	<i>Title</i>
2008/2	Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

<i>Resolution number</i>	<i>Title</i>
2008/15	Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations
2008/17	Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development
2008/28	The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration on strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development, adopted at the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Economic and Social Council
2008/34	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system
2008/36	Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations
2008/37	Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010



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Item 2

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Commission on the Status of Women

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", gender mainstreaming, situations and programmatic matters

**Report of the United Nations Development Fund for
Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence
against women**

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/166.

* E/CN.6/2009/1.



Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

1. The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (United Nations Trust Fund) is a multilateral mechanism supporting the local, national and regional efforts of Governments and non-governmental organizations to end violence against women and girls. Established in 1996 by the General Assembly in its resolution 50/166, the United Nations Trust Fund is administered by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on behalf of the United Nations system. By the end of 2008, it had supported 291 initiatives in 119 countries and territories with more than \$44 million.

2. The present report to the fifty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the tenth session of the Human Rights Council describes progress according to the strategic directions of the United Nations Trust Fund in 2008, as well as the programming of UNIFEM on violence against women.

Background and context

3. The normative environment for strengthening efforts to address violence against women and girls has improved considerably in recent years. An increasing number of Governments have passed national laws, policies and plans of action and States Members of the United Nations have repeatedly issued resolutions. In 2006, the General Assembly, in its resolution 61/143, recommended that Member States pursue systematic, multisectoral and sustained approaches to eliminating all forms of violence against women and back those with appropriate institutional and financial support, including to the United Nations Trust Fund. In 2007, the Assembly, in its resolution 62/133, called on the international community to deepen its support for national efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls. In its resolution 63/155 on that issue, adopted at its sixty-third session, the Assembly stressed the importance of new and increased contributions from all States to the Fund in order to achieve the target set by the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

4. Also in 2008, the Human Rights Council, in its resolution 7/24, encouraged the allocation of adequate resources to initiatives at national, regional and international levels to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. And specifically on the issue of sexual violence, the Security Council adopted resolution 1820 (2008), in which it demanded the cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians and noted that rape and other forms of sexual violence could constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.

5. United Nations reform and the emphasis on "delivering as one" are also galvanizing an increasing number of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to intensify their contributions to eliminating violence against women and girls, both collectively and within their own mandates. In 2006, the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.7) offered a ground-breaking synthesis of global knowledge, good practices and obstacles to ending violence against women and girls. In February 2008, at the opening of the fifty-second session of the Commission of the Status of Women, the Secretary-General launched the UNite to End Violence against Women

Campaign. The multi-year initiative aims at mobilizing public opinion and securing political will and increased resources in order to make existing commitments to ending violence against women a reality by 2015, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

6. At the midpoint for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and with gender equality and women's empowerment as one of the goals and also central to achieving all the others, increased focus on tracking and responding to the pandemic is crucial.

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

7. Since its inception, the United Nations Trust Fund has been a key global mechanism for catalysing change and supporting model strategies to end violence against women and girls. Grantees benefit from the technical assistance, synergies and opportunities available through the work of UNIFEM and the broader work of the United Nations to eliminate violence against women and girls. The United Nations Trust Fund is the only global grant-making mechanism to bring together so many United Nations agencies at the global and subregional levels to review strategies for addressing violence against women and girls.

8. The 2005-2008 Trust Fund strategy introduced measures to enhance the effectiveness of the Fund. It is in line with current national needs and with the recommendations contained in the in-depth study of the Secretary-General on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1), which called for greater attention to implementing existing human rights standards, multisectoral approaches, strengthened monitoring and evaluation and effective institutional mechanisms at all levels to ensure coordination, action and accountability. The strategy also took into account the findings of a comprehensive assessment UNIFEM had carried out in 2002 and 2003, entitled "Not a minute more", which reviewed the contributions of the United Nations Trust Fund and featured a scan of leading initiatives in different regions.

9. Paragraphs 10 to 22 below discuss progress in implementing the United Nations Trust Fund strategy in 2008, according to its five pillars: impact, involvement, efficiency, knowledge management and capacity development, and resource mobilization.

Enhancing impact

10. In order to address the serious gaps in the realization of national and international commitments to end violence against women and girls, United Nations Trust Fund grant-making has strategically focused on supporting the implementation of national laws, policies and action plans. Selected grantee initiatives in 2008 include increasing the capacity of the judiciary, law enforcement and health service providers, creating and strengthening data collection systems and indicators, building multisectoral partnerships and increasing attention to the links between violence against women and the spread of HIV and AIDS, as follows:

(a) Strengthening judicial systems is essential to ensuring the enforcement of laws that address violence against women and guaranteeing women's human rights and access to justice, with a view to ending impunity. A United Nations Trust Fund grant in India supported a lawyers' collective to develop a bench manual to assist

the judiciary in uniformly interpreting and upholding the 2005 Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act. The National Judicial Academy, India's premier judicial training institute, was closely involved in preparing the manual, along with high court judges with established track records in rendering judgments under the new law. In Bhutan, a United Nations Trust Fund-supported initiative followed up recommendations from the 2006 national consultations on women and child-friendly judicial procedures. The National Commission for Women and Children collaborated with the police and the Royal Court of Justice to institute in camera trials and investigations, in order to protect the privacy of survivors and encourage them to report crimes. Police and judges from 20 districts have undergone training on gender equality and ending violence against women. Central Government officials have now made ending violence against women a critical area for action in their tenth five-year plan;

(b) Holistic service models support the implementation of laws by responding to the multiple needs of women survivors of violence. In Albania, Refleksione Association, supported by the United Nations Trust Fund, has convened local authorities, the police and judicial officials in five municipalities to create local councils to address domestic violence. These are piloting a community-based integrated referral model, ensuring a multisectoral response in line with the national law against domestic violence. Local facilitators, supported by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, are engaged in public outreach, partnership-building, and the development of local capacities to monitor the issuance of protection orders and provide a spectrum of social, health and legal services. The Prime Minister has announced a comprehensive national public awareness-raising campaign that will further boost the project's impact and visibility;

(c) Standardized data collection provides the basis for policy and programme development and enables monitoring of progress towards implementing national commitments to ending violence against women. A United Nations Trust Fund initiative in Algeria is supporting the Information and Documentation Centre on Women's and Children's Rights to bring together six institutions in different localities to establish a common information system on violence against women. The system is helping to shape a national initiative by the ministry in charge of the family and women's condition. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, a United Nations Trust Fund-supported initiative in Southern Africa has drawn on Latin American experiences to develop indicators on violence against women. Gender Links is working with local partners in six countries and the Southern African Development Community to devise a composite index of targets and indicators for measuring violence against women in the region. The South African Police Service has agreed, as part of a pilot study on baseline data, to share statistics that were previously not available. In the Colombian municipality of Soacha, United Nations Trust Fund-assisted activities by Corporación Centro de Apoyo Popular have mapped high-risk areas for sexual and street violence against women. Advocates used this information to push successfully for changes in the new municipal development plan. These include the creation of a police station specifically for family issues and gender-sensitization training for public employees, particularly to increase police capacities to use a gender perspective in assessing the risks of violence. Women's groups are now monitoring public planning and budgeting sessions to ensure these commitments are fulfilled;

(d) Partnerships and political will extend the reach and increase the sustainability of United Nations Trust Fund grants, offering critical support for immediate actions to end violence against women and girls, while fostering the longer-term transformation of discriminatory attitudes and practices. Since Rozrada and the Kiev School of Equality, United Nations Trust Fund grantees in Ukraine, successfully advocated for improvements in laws to eliminate intra-family violence, 2,000 central and local service providers have been trained on issues such as identifying women survivors of violence and providing psychological support. The initiative has helped broker collaboration among the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, service providers and non-governmental organizations to coordinate anti-violence efforts and build on the sharing of joint resources. In Cameroon, the United Nations Trust Fund has supported an initiative by the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy that reached an agreement with the General Delegation for National Security to create separate police units for investigating cases of violence against women. The initiative has also created three networks comprised of journalists, women leaders and traditional authorities to address and raise awareness on violence against women. The latter has already proved successful in reducing harmful practices such as widowhood rites, as reported by project beneficiaries;

(e) In Puntland State, Somalia, where sustained conflict has fanned violence against women and other human rights violations, public recognition of the severity of the problems has been low. With United Nations Trust Fund support, the Ministry of Women, Development and Family Affairs has been equipped with new capacities to collect data and monitor violence against women. It has produced information that prompted the President of the Puntland State to call explicitly for greater rigour from security forces in upholding existing laws, request parliamentarians to consider drafting stronger legislation and place ending violence against women on the Cabinet agenda. Through its network of sub-offices, the Ministry is also reaching out to religious and community leaders, police officers and community organizations to raise awareness and build consensus that all parts of society must assume responsibility for ending violence against women. Senior religious leaders are coming together to determine how customary laws can be aligned with international human rights norms. Clan elders have agreed to discuss their role in ending violence against women as part of national reconciliation talks. The Ministry has formulated a national plan of action to guide future steps, including the adoption of standard operating procedures to be applied by all individuals and groups involved in responding to and preventing violence against women.

11. Grantees under the special window to address the intersection of violence against women and HIV and AIDS are providing the following targeted services and empowerment to women who face those twin pandemics:

(a) In the Russian Federation, the United Nations Trust Fund has supported Doctors to Children to survey gaps in the system of assistance to HIV-positive women who are victims of violence, especially those who are pregnant or have young children. Representatives from the departments for social protection, health and internal affairs of the Kalininsky District of St. Petersburg subsequently convened to develop an intersectoral protocol for regulating services to women victims of violence and create an interdisciplinary training programme for staff. An intersectoral team is now piloting service provision under the protocol, from early identification procedures to referrals;

(b) To ensure the effectiveness of its mass communication campaigns, Breakthrough, in India, is working in the States of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, where there is a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, to survey public knowledge about the pandemic and its connections to violence against women. For example, it found that only 3.3 per cent of respondents knew about the Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act, and that a man's unwillingness to use a condom was among the reasons least acceptable to men for women to refuse sex. The grantee recruited leading advertising agency Ogilvy and Mather to produce, pro bono, the Ring the Bell multimedia campaign, which urges men to take a stand against domestic violence. The campaign was launched during the XVII International AIDS Conference, in August 2008, and it is expected to reach over 50 million people in the three States. The central Ministry of Women and Child Development has picked up campaign materials for its national campaigns to end violence against women, and is disseminating them in the media in 23 languages;

(c) Many United Nations Trust Fund-supported initiatives focus their activities on the rights and needs of especially excluded groups, effectively building bridges to greater resources, opportunities and awareness. An initiative in Nepal to uphold the rights of migrant women workers facing the risk of violence and HIV infection established a partnership with the Skills for Employment Project, funded by the Government and the Asian Development Bank. SAMANATA Institute for Social and Gender Equality, drawing on its extensive experience with migrant women, held train-the-trainer sessions on links between violence against women and HIV and AIDS for staff of the Skills for Employment Project. They subsequently designed a module for their own curriculum, which offers technical and vocational training to 80,000 men and women. The United Nations Trust Fund grantee also conducted orientation trainings for 1,500 migrant workers in five cities in the first half of 2008 and has supported the formation of a national network for safe migration to continue work in that area. In Peru, the Minga Perú Association backs a group with extensive experience in intercultural communication in reaching poor, indigenous, rural communities, which are not only vulnerable to violence against women and HIV but also the most neglected by previous outreach efforts. Training for students and teachers in 24 rural schools in the department of Loreto has been coupled with new programming on a popular radio show. It invites community participation through letters that are read on the air or used to guide programme topics; nearly 5,000 letters arrived over the course of the project. The show now reaches 89 per cent of rural students in Loreto, helping to reduce wide information gaps. Students report that they are more aware of the quality of their relationships, the need to use condoms and the right to live free from violence.

Deepening involvement

12. Eliminating violence against women and girls rests on mobilizing broad-based partnerships and multi-stakeholder alliances and garnering the commitment of an ever-growing range of actors. As reported in paragraphs 10 and 11, above, grantees play central roles in mobilizing local and national stakeholders around the issue of ending violence against women and girls.

13. States Members of the United Nations are essential United Nations Trust Fund partners through their role as key stakeholders, providing high-level policy direction and support at the national and international levels. Representatives of Member States also participate in public information initiatives to raise awareness on the

United Nations Trust Fund and on emerging issues and effective strategies to end violence against women and girls. For example, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Abdoulaye Wade, President of Senegal,¹ were the first Heads of State to sign on to the UNIFEM Say NO to Violence against Women Campaign, part of the UNite to End Violence against Women Campaign, which appeals for public support and increased resources for the United Nations Trust Fund. An additional 28 presidents and prime ministers have also signed on to the campaigns.² The Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands publicly reiterated his pledge of support to the United Nations Trust Fund upon receiving the MDG3 Champion Torch, an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark to galvanize commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.³ Member States are also the main donors to the United Nations Trust Fund. In 2008, the Governments of Australia, Austria, Brazil, Finland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America made their contributions.

14. The private sector has an important role to play in ending violence against women and girls, not only in terms of philanthropy but also through employee policies, high-visibility marketing outlets for awareness-raising, or in-kind contributions of expertise. Since 2005, Johnson & Johnson has been supporting the special window on links between violence against women and HIV and AIDS with \$700,000 a year. In 2008, Avon Products announced a public-private partnership to promote women's empowerment and end violence against women, which committed \$1 million to the United Nations Trust Fund, the largest single annual private sector contribution ever. Also Tag Heuer, non-profit organization Zonta International, UNIFEM National Committees,⁴ Cinema for Peace Foundation, and the United Nations Foundation made contributions in 2008.

15. The United Nations Trust Fund is built on the notion of United Nations partnerships, which are assured through the coordinating role of over 20 United Nations agency members of the global and subregional inter-agency programme appraisal committees. In 2008, in addition to UNIFEM, programme appraisal committee members at global and subregional levels included the Division for the Advancement of Women; the Economic Commission for Africa; the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the International Labour Organization; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations

¹ Senegal's Prime Minister Cheikh Hadjibou Soumare and 23 Government ministers signed as well.

² Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Palestinian National Authority, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Solomon Islands, Spain, Timor-Leste and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

³ Recipients of the MDG3 Champion Torch are representatives of Governments, the private sector, civil society, the media and international organizations, from the North and South. At the United Nations high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals on 25 September 2008, all commitments were presented to the Secretary-General, who will be invited to light the last MDG3 Champion Torch. For more details, visit www.mdg3action.um.dk/en/menu/MDG+3+Torch/Torch+Campaign/.

⁴ Austria, Iceland, Italy and the United States of America.

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the World Food Programme; the World Health Organization; the World Bank; and United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict. Programme appraisal committee members also include leading non-governmental organization representatives and other experts.⁵

16. In recent years, the United Nations Trust Fund has worked to deepen the participation of United Nations agencies in decision-making processes, in order to foster increased ownership across the United Nations system. Previously, decisions were made only at the global level, through the inter-agency programme appraisal committees convened by UNIFEM headquarters. Beginning in 2005, the process was decentralized to actively engage subregional inter-agency programme appraisal committees convened by UNIFEM. In 2008, subregional inter-agency programme appraisal committees met in Barbados, Brazil, Ecuador, Fiji, Ghana, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, South Africa and Thailand. Three United Nations resident coordinators⁶ also took part in the appraisal process. As the United Nations Trust Fund administrator, UNIFEM continues to explore further opportunities for expanded United Nations and United Nations country team roles in enhancing the effectiveness and impact of the United Nations Trust Fund, especially at the country level.

Ensuring efficiency

17. As a United Nations inter-agency mechanism, the United Nations Trust Fund fosters coherence in programme strategies to end violence against women and girls, helps to pool and track global resources and strengthens monitoring and accountability. All of these functions are in accordance with the principles of alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability set out in the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

18. Across its operations, the United Nations Trust Fund relies on minimal infrastructure and lean staffing so that maximum resources are directed to country-level grant-making. In addition, resources are directly channelled to local government and civil society organization partners. The United Nations Trust Fund grant appraisal process, which actively engages United Nations agencies at subregional and global levels, also enables linkages to existing United Nations efforts and national priorities. This decentralized and broadly participatory structure helps ensure that funding allocation conforms closely to the capacities and needs of diverse countries and regions.

19. As United Nations Trust Fund resources continue to grow, a shift to larger and longer-term grants allows the more efficient use of resources in the administration of the fund. While in previous years the average grant was \$50,000 for two years, grants starting in 2007 have been issued in the range of \$100,000 to \$300,000 for

⁵ At the global level, these include representatives of MADRE, PATH, Amnesty International, the Centre for Women's Global Leadership and Human Rights Watch; at the national level, they include representatives from Oxfam, the Open Society Institute, the Heinrich Böll Foundation, Norwegian People's Aid and the Urgent Action Fund.

⁶ Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

two to three years. In 2008, some grants were as high as \$1 million for two to three years. The time and labour required to review, approve, monitor and support grantees is therefore more cost-effective in relation to the results and impacts expected of larger-scale initiatives.

Generating knowledge and developing capacities

20. Though replicable strategies to end violence against women and girls have begun to emerge, a major challenge has been the lack of systematic and accessible evidence of what works. The United Nations Trust Fund has therefore concentrated on its role in expanding the global knowledge base of effective approaches to ending violence against women and girls. In 2008, the United Nations Trust Fund adopted a monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management framework to enhance its systems to generate, capture and disseminate knowledge through increased investments in monitoring and evaluation.

21. The United Nations Trust Fund has been investing in generating new knowledge and capturing lessons that can promote replication and upscaling of successful models of intervention. For example, under the HIV and AIDS window, particular emphasis has been placed on ensuring a rigorous monitoring and evaluation plan. The United Nations Trust Fund will support the process for three years and ensure that lessons learned are widely available and shared. At the end of the pilot experience, the United Nations Trust Fund aims to have produced a tool for cross-country evidence-based learning and programming to effectively deploy strategies to respond to the linkages between violence against women and HIV and AIDS.

Mobilizing resources

22. Overall funding for initiatives to address violence against women is on the rise, evidenced by the rapid growth of the United Nations Trust Fund resource base over the past few years. Between 1996 and 2004, the United Nations Trust Fund received just under \$10 million in total contributions. For the period 2005-2008, total contributions, including pledges, have amounted to a total of \$40 million. In 2008, the United Nations Trust Fund had \$22 million to offer for grant-making. The increase in annual contributions, however, still lags behind the vast needs and demands at country levels. In 2008, the United Nations Trust Fund was still only able to meet four per cent of the \$525 million in requests received. In order to meet the increasing demand, the United Nations Trust Fund seeks broad-based support in order to achieve its annual target of a minimum of \$100 million by 2015, in the framework of the UNite to End Violence against Women Campaign.

2008 United Nations Trust Fund grant-making cycle

23. Calls for proposals for United Nations Trust Fund grants are issued annually through an open and competitive selection process. Initiatives should be grounded in human rights and responsive to gender equality goals, including by addressing inequitable gender norms that cause violence against women and girls. They should be holistic and focus on reaching particularly excluded or disadvantaged groups through approaches tailored to diverse needs. They should pursue multisectoral partnerships, and generate and share knowledge. To optimize the use of resources, they should apply evidence of what works and invest in systematic and

comprehensive documentation and evaluation. The United Nations Trust Fund emphasizes innovation and investment at the local level, where they are needed most. It also underscores the potential for scaling up and replicating successful and sustainable initiatives and the need to link community initiatives with national priorities.

24. In 2008, the United Nations Trust Fund issued its thirteenth call for proposals to support the implementation of laws, policies and action plans on ending violence against women. Proposals were received under two categories: "Meeting the implementation and upscaling challenge" and "Catalytic, innovative and learning initiatives". For the first time, United Nations country teams working in close coordination with national stakeholders⁷ have been invited to apply for United Nations Trust Fund grants, a further expression of the commitment to strengthen United Nations collaboration to end violence against women and girls.

25. A total of 1,068 concept notes were received. Programme appraisal committees awarded an historic \$22 million to 28 initiatives in 38 countries and territories. Grantees included Governments (8 per cent), non-governmental organizations (65 per cent) and United Nations country teams working in partnership with Governments and non-governmental organizations (27 per cent).

26. Under the "Meeting the implementation and upscaling challenge" category, the United Nations Trust Fund awarded \$14 million in grants to 16 initiatives in 26 countries and territories;⁸ and \$8 million to 12 initiatives spanning 14 countries⁹ under the "catalytic, innovative and learning initiatives" category. The following examples highlight select grantee initiatives:

(a) In Serbia, the Provincial secretariat for labour, employment and gender equality will work towards improving prevention, protection and support services by scaling up successful cooperation initiatives that knit together the efforts of social service providers, the police, legal professionals, local authorities and non-governmental organizations. Through action-oriented research, capacity development and coalition-building, the secretariat will enhance capacities and strengthen intersectoral and multidisciplinary links to ensure that assistance is effective and readily available. It will also cover women at risk of violence as well as women already experiencing violence and will include specific actions to reach women and girls in poor and marginalized communities, such as rural, refugee, Roma and disabled women;

(b) In China, the United Nations country team will build upon previous pilots to scale up responses to domestic violence in the Hunan, Gansu and Sichuan provinces, with a special focus on ethnic minorities and persons displaced by the recent earthquake. A joint programme will support the development of a multisectoral model to respond systematically to domestic violence and ensure increased access to support services, such as legal aid and enhanced referral

⁷ This decision was recommended by the United Nations Trust Fund inter-agency programme appraisal committees and endorsed by the UNIFEM Consultative Committee as a pilot.

⁸ Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Cook Islands, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, India, Jordan, Kiribati, Lebanon, Nepal, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Russian Federation, Serbia, Solomon Islands, Syrian Arab Republic, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Yemen and Zambia.

⁹ Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Ethiopia, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Liberia, Morocco, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Suriname and Tajikistan.

systems. By working in close partnership with the All-China Women's Federation, the Public Security Bureau and the Ministries of Health, Justice and Civil Affairs, the United Nations country team will encourage high-level political commitment to adopting national policy and legislation on domestic violence. The country team will also monitor and document the process as a basis for China's further rollout of, and advocacy for, policy and legal reforms;

(c) In Brazil, Chile, India and Rwanda, Instituto Promundo and partner organizations will embark on an innovative cross-regional initiative that will use rigorous evaluation to identify effective strategies for engaging men in stopping violence against women. Educational workshops and campaign activities tailored to requirements in each country will centre on deconstructing traditional notions of masculinity and manhood, promoting gender-equitable and non-violent alternatives and encouraging positive changes in attitudes and behaviours. By focusing on evaluation methods to assess actual changes in attitudes and behaviour, as reported by men and their partners, Promundo will compile valuable lessons and make a much needed contribution to the global knowledge base in this critical area. Evaluation results will be widely disseminated through the MenEngage Alliance, a network of more than 400 organizations. Instituto Promundo's partners in the four regions include the International Center for Research on Women (India), Men's Resources International (United States of America), Cultura Salud/EME (Chile), Sahayog (India), the Rwanda's Men's Resource Centre, Men Engage Network (Rwanda) and Men's Resources International (Rwanda);

(d) In Morocco, the National Institute for Solidarity with Women will expand its pioneering work in defending the rights and promoting the social reintegration of single mothers and young girls exploited as domestic labourers, in a context where both groups suffer exclusion and face multiple forms of violence. The organization will seek to improve legal protections for those two groups and reduce social stigma through advocacy campaigns. It will also work directly with single mothers and girls engaged in domestic work to support their social reintegration, through employment and training for the first group, and the return to school and family for the second. A model unit for the orientation and professional reinsertion of single mothers will be piloted at the organization and replicated in five other organizations working to end violence against women. Partnerships with private sector associations will help determine training needs and foster the notion of corporate social responsibility within the business community;

(e) In Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, Delhi, India; Rosario, Argentina, and Petrozavodsk, Russian Federation, Women in Cities International will respond to the challenges posed by the rapid pace and nature of urbanization taking place throughout the world. With crime and violence on the rise, women increasingly face the fear of sexual violence as a constant threat to their mobility and well-being. Building on existing knowledge and using a variety of tools, Women in Cities International will map the geography of public gender inequality and exclusion and its intersection with race, caste, religion and migrant status in four cities on four continents. It will also identify effective policies and programmes that work for greater equality. These will contribute to pilot interventions in partnership with Governments and non-governmental organizations, which seek to create cities that are inclusive and respect the right of all people to live, work and move around without fear and barriers;

(f) Common strategies across countries in which partners received grants are emerging. In Cambodia, Cameroon, Ecuador, Jordan, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan, grantees will scale up model centres for survivors of gender-based violence. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, India, Nepal and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, grantees will scale up models of multisectoral responses for survivors of gender-based violence. In the Pacific region (Cook Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and others), and in Panama and Peru, grantees will create and strengthen government and civil society partnerships to address violence against women. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia, grantees will address impunity through raising awareness and developing the capacities of the judiciary. In Ecuador, Lebanon and Liberia, grantees will address prevention either by working with men and boys or promoting women's economic empowerment. In Jamaica and Nicaragua, grantees will harness the power of the mass media and the arts to promote equitable and non-violent behaviours and attitudes. In Cameroon, a grantee will address violence against girls in schools. In Ethiopia, a grantee will mobilize communities against harmful practices. In Suriname, a grantee will develop a model to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

The way forward

27. As the United Nations Trust Fund approaches the end of its 2005-2008 strategy, an external evaluation is under way to assess its implementation at global and country levels. The evaluation will identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges and current trends and provide forward-looking recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the role of the United Nations Trust Fund in ending violence against women and girls. A new strategy for the United Nations Trust Fund will be developed in 2009, based in part on the findings of the external evaluation.

28. The United Nations Trust Fund will continue to invest in strengthening its systems for capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. United Nations Trust Fund grantees will be provided guidance and skills-building to develop their capacities in evidence-based programme design, monitoring and evaluation. Further, the United Nations Trust Fund will provide adequate technical and financial support to grantees to systematically monitor and evaluate initiatives, also fostering targeted learning and multi-country learning initiatives.

29. The United Nations Trust Fund is investing in a robust online database system that will serve both to collect and systematize findings, facilitating results-based reporting and analysis across grants. By capturing, disseminating and making learning from grantee reports and evaluations widely available, the United Nations Trust Fund contributes to the global knowledge base on effective programme approaches to ending violence against women and girls, generating and nurturing new theories and practices, as well as lessons learned and models for scaling up. In this way, the United Nations Trust Fund is uniquely placed to function as a global observatory of emerging good practices, contributing to programming excellence, maximization of results and efficient use of resources.

30. With a strong and bold strategy, greater political commitment and increased resources, the United Nations Trust Fund will continue to work to make the vision

of ending violence against women and girls, and achieving the Millennium Development Goals, a reality.

Programming of UNIFEM from the multi-year funding framework, 2004-2007, to the strategic plan, 2008-2011

31. In addition to administering the Trust Fund on behalf of the United Nations system, UNIFEM continues to invest in advocacy efforts, brokering partnerships, inter-agency collaboration and pioneering approaches to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. These efforts are supported through core and cost-sharing funds secured by UNIFEM. Building on its partnerships and programming experience under the multi-year funding framework 2004-2007 and seizing on the unprecedented historic momentum exemplified at international and national levels to end violence against women and girls, UNIFEM has developed a strategy on the theme "A life free of violence: unleashing the power of women's empowerment and gender equality," in line with its strategic plan 2008-2011, which elaborates the institutional direction and priority areas to accelerate progress towards the implementation and upscaling challenge.

32. The strategy outlines a deepening of the ongoing work of UNIFEM in advocacy and awareness-raising; policy and legal reform; addressing the linkages between violence against women and HIV and AIDS; and developing capacities to increase access to services and justice for survivors. UNIFEM has also identified emerging areas for intensified future programming, such as incorporating the issue of violence against women and girls into leading policy and funding frameworks; aligning informal and formal justice systems with international human rights standards; addressing sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations; and developing targeted prevention approaches, especially with key groups, such as men and adolescents.

Programming for effective laws and policies on violence against women and girls, including adequate budget allocations for implementation

33. UNIFEM has continued to support the development, reform, adoption and implementation of legislation and policies to address domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, and harmful practices, among other forms of violence against women at global, regional and national levels. For example, in Fiji and Vanuatu, UNIFEM supported the regional rights training team and the United Nations Development Programme in advocating for the passage of sexual and gender-based violence bills. In Thailand, UNIFEM provided technical inputs to the amended Penal Code, which now criminalizes marital rape, and has given legislative reform support to the Alliance on the Elimination of Violence against Women in Pakistan. At the regional level, the sustained collaboration of UNIFEM with the Southern African Development Community Gender Unit and with the NGO Alliance contributed to the adoption of the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development. In South-East Asia, UNIFEM, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs of Viet Nam and the National Committee for the Advancement of Vietnamese Women convened a workshop funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for representatives of 10 member States, Japan and Timor-Leste on domestic violence legislation reform and implementation. In the Great Lakes region, UNIFEM supported the Protocol on

the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children and, at the global level engaged in avid advocacy efforts that contributed to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), which recognizes sexual violence in conflict as a security issue.

34. Developing workable policies and programmes depends on reliable data, information and knowledge. UNIFEM, in cooperation with Governments, civil society and other partners, works to strengthen qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. In Rwanda, UNIFEM, along with the National University, developed baseline data on sexual and gender-based violence, and in Timor-Leste, mapped sexual and gender-based violence incidences, services and access to justice in two districts with the National Statistics Office. In Burundi, UNIFEM collaborated with UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF to conduct training for civil society organizations and police on statistics and data collection. UNIFEM supported the National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information in Mexico to produce a full classification and analysis by State of crimes against women. In collaboration with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), UNIFEM conducted a gender analysis of the studies on sexual violence against the girl child, undertaken by UNICEF, ESCAP and End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, in seven Pacific countries and commissioned baseline surveys of cross-border traders in different African subregions to obtain initial data on violence experienced by women traders.

35. Integrating the issue of violence against women into national development and funding frameworks and strengthening national action plans on violence against women and girls, in particular, can serve as valuable ways of setting in place the institutional, technical and financial resources required for effective coordinated responses. UNIFEM has supported those processes in a number of countries, for example, with its contribution to the development of a national strategy and plan on gender-based violence in Afghanistan. In Georgia, UNIFEM supported national partners to mainstream gender in an economic recovery and poverty reduction paper, which, as adopted in the political statement of the Parliament, contains a commitment to reduce harmful practices against women, including family violence. UNIFEM regional efforts have included the convening of a high-level regional consultation towards the creation of the first regional action plan to eradicate sexual violence and end impunity in the Great Lakes region in cooperation with UNICEF, OHCHR, UNFPA and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In West Africa, a UNIFEM-supported workshop with Christian and Muslim religious leaders resulted in the adoption of an action plan that includes tackling violence against women.

36. Implementation of laws and policies requires adequate resource allocation by Government. Through gender-responsive budgeting programme efforts of UNIFEM in South-Eastern Europe, increases to the 2008 regional and municipal budgets of Bosnia and Herzegovina were made for civil society-run domestic violence shelters with ensured and sustained co-financing of shelter operations by amendments to the domestic violence law. In Bolivia, UNIFEM-supported advocacy by the Instituto de Formación Femenina Integral led to municipal budget guidelines that mandate resource allocations to programmes that promote gender equality and provide services for women survivors of violence.

Programming to develop the capacity of key policy, service delivery and media institutions to address violence against women and girls

37. UNIFEM has a long-standing history of support to and partnership with Governments to enhance capacities in prevention and response to violence against women. In Rwanda, the UNIFEM-led, UNDP-supported programme on enhancing protection from gender-based violence expanded its work with the Rwanda Defence Forces to train military officers and established a gender coordinating desk within the Defence Forces, with focal points attached at brigade and battalion levels, an intervention replicated by Burundi and the Sudan. In Liberia, UNIFEM worked within the security sector to obtain commitments towards ensuring integration of women-friendly practices into their operations with respect to the prevention and response to sex and gender-based violence cases. In Burundi, UNIFEM worked with the police and judiciary to improve protection mechanisms for survivors, and in Uganda, supported the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to institutionalize training on sex and gender-based violence for all police recruits in the northern region.

38. In the justice sector, UNIFEM, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization Pro-Femmes, trained Gacaca judges in Rwanda in dealing with sex and gender-based violence cases, which led to the transfer of such cases to the formal justice system. UNIFEM also established a partnership with the Supreme Court of Rwanda, training judges and prosecutors and highlighting the need to review court procedures in order to facilitate access to justice for sex and gender-based violence survivors. In Liberia, UNIFEM worked with the police, prison authorities, judges and law court officials to apply gender justice principles to sex and gender-based violence cases. In Haiti, UNIFEM supported the Ministère à la condition féminine et aux droits des femmes to develop training modules and train justices of the peace on gender-based violence, including methods of prosecuting sex and gender-based violence cases in select communities across two provinces. In Viet Nam, UNIFEM provided assistance for a two-day training course for 100 National Assembly deputies on the supervision of the implementation of gender equality laws, including the Family Violence Prevention Law.

39. UNIFEM has also supported the efforts of its partners in the media, such as the Association of Women Journalists in Burundi, which conducted training sessions, held events and disseminated information on the Penal Code and rape. Partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda were also given support to implement radio programmes on care for sex and gender-based violence survivors, with awareness-raising radio messages informing communities of available services.

40. UNIFEM continues to develop critical global partnerships with groups and networks that are vital allies in expanding the reach of violence prevention efforts. At the institutional level, UNIFEM has joined forces with the MenEngage Alliance, which represents over 450 organizations working with men and boys to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls. In November, UNIFEM solidified collaboration with Religions for Peace, the world's largest and most representative multireligious coalition, to harness the power of communities of faith around the world to help end violence against women and girls.

41. UNIFEM also continues to play a key role in large-scale inter-agency initiatives on violence against women, including as a founding and active member of United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Inter-Agency

Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, the Task Force on Violence against Women established within the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Adolescent Girls, and as a member of the six United Nations entities on the high-level steering committee of the UNite to End Violence Against Women campaign. UNIFEM serves as a lead or partner agency on several joint United Nations initiatives on violence against women, including programmes sponsored by the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund of the Government of Spain in Bangladesh, Colombia and Morocco; the Asia Pacific regional joint programme entitled "Partners for prevention: working with boys and men to prevent gender-based violence"; and the One United Nations pilots in Albania, Rwanda and Uruguay.

Programming to strengthen community-level initiatives that address violence against women and girls

42. Community-level initiatives to end violence against women and girls are fundamental to effecting sustained change. UNIFEM is strengthening promising initiatives while supporting innovative and emerging areas of programming. For example, in Afghanistan, UNIFEM launched a special fund for the elimination of violence against women and the girl child, providing 10 initial grants to community-led initiatives that are addressing violence against women. Other local initiatives have been supported through the two-year UNIFEM programme funded by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which focuses on community-led responses to peacebuilding and preventing sexual violence in conflict in Afghanistan, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Timor-Leste and Uganda. Building on the promising Safe Cities programme carried out in Latin America in partnership with sister agencies and with the support of the Government of Spain, UNIFEM is launching a pilot Global Safe Cities initiative spanning 8 to 10 geographically representative sites, which will participate in developing a rigorously evaluated global model.

Programming to support excluded women, gender equality experts, advocates and their organizations or networks working to end violence against women and girls

43. UNIFEM has consistently maintained strong ties to women's groups, gender equality experts, human rights organizations and women's ministries, leveraging their capacities and political influence to sustain public and policy attention on violence against women and to promote implementation and accountability among Government counterparts, civil society organizations and United Nations partners. In Burkina Faso, UNIFEM partnered with the Minister of Women's Affairs on the conference of First Ladies on cross-border aspects of female genital mutilation, which shared the results of a UNIFEM-sponsored study on the cross-border nature of the practice in six West African countries. UNIFEM has supported a number of initiatives surrounding the post-election violence in Kenya, including collaboration with other United Nations and non-governmental organization partners to produce a rapid assessment of gender-based violence; enhance the ability of the Kenyan Women Lawyers group to respond to rape cases and to develop guidelines for women's testimony. In select areas of India, UNIFEM has supported the formation of adolescent groups to empower survivors and vulnerable persons to protect themselves against trafficking and violence. In Rwanda, UNIFEM supported the

establishment of a gender-based violence committee that has trained and sensitized residents in the Rutsiro District on the prevention of sexual violence against women and children.

44. UNIFEM facilitates a number of opportunities for information-sharing, exchange of knowledge and learning to bolster the advocacy and implementation efforts of partners. A UNIFEM-supported regional workshop convened by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation brought together United Nations Trust Fund grantees, local authorities and service delivery organizations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to impart their experiences and knowledge in implementing coordinated community responses to domestic violence. At the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, UNIFEM organized, in collaboration with UNFPA and UNDP, a satellite session on the intersections between violence against women and HIV and AIDS, which highlighted programmatic learning for evidence-based advocacy and strategic policy interventions towards improved implementation and scale-up. In the Caribbean, UNIFEM supported the development of a violence against women and HIV training course addressing prevention, treatment and care, as well as responses to emerging policy issues. As part of the UNIFEM and Red Mujeres y Hábitat Safe Cities Programme, supported by the Government of Spain, an online learning course was created on urban violence, insecurity and discrimination. At the global level, UNIFEM is developing an online site that will provide country-level implementers with step-by-step programming guidance, promising practices and lead tools on ending violence against women and girls.

45. UNIFEM plays a key role in promoting the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008) in partnership with various stakeholders. These efforts include the UNIFEM-facilitated Wilton Park conference, undertaken in collaboration with United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and troop-contributing Governments, including Canada and the United Kingdom, on the role of military peacekeepers in addressing sexual violence during armed conflict; the Arria Formula, hosted by the United Kingdom, which fed into background discussion material for the Security Council debate on the theme "Women, peace and security: sexual violence in situations of armed conflict"; and the UNIFEM and Joan B. Kroc Center for Peace and Justice co-sponsored conference on crafting human security in an insecure world, where the policy and operational aspects of implementing Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) were addressed. UNIFEM also collaborated with the French Presidency of the European Union to hold a conference on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008), aiming to ensure that European Union security, police and justice missions are equipped to respond to women's security and justice needs.

46. UNIFEM sustains awareness-raising initiatives and campaigns of its own and through support to its partners to build public consciousness on violence against women and girls. Every year across the globe, UNIFEM avidly participates in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign. In collaboration with UNFPA and other partners, UNIFEM supported a BBC seven-part series entitled Women on the Frontline, which profiled issues of rape, femicide and trafficking in various countries. In one of the largest and most renowned campaigns of UNIFEM, Say NO to Violence against Women, over 5 million signatures, including from

Heads of State and ministers representing 60 Governments and from more than 600 parliamentarians from over 70 countries were gathered and delivered to the Secretary-General on 25 November 2008 in support of the campaign.

Conclusions

47. UNIFEM will continue its efforts to bridge the implementation and accountability gap by supporting intensified country-level action, as called for by the campaign of the Secretary-General, through ongoing lead technical assistance; intensified capacity development; broadened advocacy and awareness-raising endeavours; strengthened partnerships within and outside of the United Nations system, including through key inputs to inter-agency initiatives; improved monitoring and evaluation of programming interventions; intensified mobilization of resources for this immensely underfunded human rights and development priority; and provision of new and innovative learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities and products.



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Strengthening the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to resolution 52/3 of the Commission on the Status of Women. It summarizes the efforts of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to strengthen and expand its training and research activities in the following areas: (a) gender, migration and development; (b) governance and women's political participation; and (c) gender, peace and security, in accordance with its strategic framework for 2008-2011.

The report also describes the progress the Institute has made to secure sufficient funds to finance its core activities and its continued efforts to collaborate with United Nations system entities, international organizations, governmental institutions, national gender machineries, research and training institutes, civil society organizations and the private sector.



I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/3, the Commission on the Status of Women requested the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), in accordance with its mandate, to collaborate with the United Nations system, national machinery, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in promoting international cooperation to foster women's empowerment and gender equality, including through, inter alia, the promotion of better access to education for women and girls, and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes. The Commission also called on the Institute to continue to assist countries upon their request, in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women through training programmes. In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution to the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, in 2009, through the Commission at its fifty-third session. The present report responds to the above mandate.

II. Activities of the Executive Board of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women

2. The Institute functions under the authority of an Executive Board that is composed of 10 Member States¹ elected by the Economic and Social Council.

3. During its fifth session, the Executive Board approved the Institute's workplan and budget for 2009, a networking strategy, a medium-term resource mobilization strategy to secure a more sustainable financial base to support future operations and decisions and recommendations of the Institute.

III. Implementation of the strategic framework 2008-2011

4. The Institute continued to implement its new strategic framework 2008-2011,² which carries forward the priorities established in the previous strategic framework (2004-2007). The current framework provides for the consolidation of the Institute's research and training programmes and the enhancement of its knowledge-management capacity to ensure that research results have a concrete impact on policy and programme formulation and implementation and contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

5. In the implementation of its strategic framework 2008-2011, the Institute continues to work towards ensuring long-term financial stability by increasing the level of voluntary contributions for both its core operations and extrabudgetary projects, and to consolidate its research and capacity-building activities in the areas of gender, migration and development; gender, governance and women's political participation; and gender, peace and security. The Institute also seeks to respond to

¹ Members for the period 2007-2009 are: Belarus, Egypt, Grenada, Honduras (President), Israel, Philippines (Vice-President/Rapporteur), Slovakia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic (Vice-President) and Zimbabwe.

² INSTRAW/EB/2007/R.3/Rev.1.

the needs of women worldwide related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, such as poverty alleviation, financing for development, micro-enterprise development and knowledge management.

6. In August 2008, the Institute held the first virtual meeting of the Gender Training Community of Practice Working Group, which brought together experts who will be responsible for coordinating the development and maintenance of the Community of Practice. In September 2008, the Institute launched the virtual platform for the Community of Practice and in December 2008 concluded a comprehensive update of the Gender Training Wiki with additional information and tools to make it more interactive. Also in September 2008, the Gender Training Community of Practice launched its first virtual dialogue, which brought together experts in the fields of capacity development, gender and knowledge management in order to share their experiences with gender training as a tool for gender mainstreaming and sustainable development, identify recommendations for strengthening gender training, and discuss how to move forward with the Community of Practice. It is intended that the Community of Practice will serve as a pilot for the development of other communities of practice related to the Institute's strategic and thematic areas of work.

A. Gender, migration and development

7. In the area of migration and development, the Institute completed its paper on a revised theoretical framework, entitled "Crossing Borders II: Migration and Development from a Gender Perspective", which builds on the reflections and analyses presented in the original paper "Crossing Borders: Gender, Remittances and Development" (INSTRAW, 2005). Prepared within a development framework that places gender equality at its centre, the framework explores emerging themes on the relationship between economic migration and development, with a specific focus on the new gender division of labour and the specific labour niches for migrants in different contexts. In addition to furthering the Institute's research on the structural causes of gender inequalities in migration and development, the new theoretical framework includes research of migratory policies from the perspective of migrants' rights.

8. "Crossing Borders II" also includes an initial exploration and analysis of the issue of global care chains. Global care chains are created as a result of the so-called care crisis generated by the inadequate public response to the increasing number of women in developed countries entering the labour market, generating the demand for domestic and care labour. This care crisis has opened up opportunities in developed countries, mostly for migrant women, which have resulted in the creation of global care chains as migrant women leave their own reproductive labour to other women in their countries of origin (usually either a female family member or a hired worker).

9. To further examine a response to these challenges, in August 2008, the Institute initiated a new project on the theme "Building networks: women and global care chains in Latin America". The aim of the project is to examine the creation of global care chains through four case studies in labour markets in Bolivia-Spain, Ecuador-Spain, Peru-Chile and Peru-Spain. Funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the project will formulate proposals that place the issue of care on the development agenda, in particular in contexts of women's reproductive role and gender equality.

10. In an effort to integrate its work in this area with its other thematic areas, in particular with the area dealing with gender, governance and women's political participation, the Institute prepared an internal concept paper entitled "Drawing links: women, decision-making and economic participation at the local level".

11. To enrich its theoretical framework and research methodologies, the Institute launched its first virtual dialogue among experts focusing on the theme "Gender, migration, remittances and development: towards a participatory research framework", held from 8 September to 3 October 2008. Participants included more than 70 experts, academics and researchers from over 20 countries.

12. This initial dialogue was followed up with a second dialogue, on the theme "Gender, migration, remittances and development: creating gender sensitive migration policy", conducted from 3 to 21 November 2008, in order to identify current issues in migration policy from a gender perspective and to compile good practices and lessons learned from existing experiences. Participants included more than 220 experts, academics and researchers from over 40 countries. This follow-up networking activity aimed to bring the conceptual discussions of gender, migration and development issues to the level of concrete policy and programme recommendations.

13. The joint study of INSTRAW and the International Fund for Agricultural Development entitled "Gender, Remittances and Local Rural Development: The case of Filipino migration to Italy" was launched in English in May 2008, and has been translated into Italian and Spanish and published online. As a follow-up to the study, the Institute, in collaboration with the Filipino Women's Council, developed a guide for Filipino migrants living in Italy, which includes inputs provided during the workshops held in October 2007 with relevant stakeholders in Italy and the Philippines.

14. To complete this project, the Institute published three policy briefs that highlight the recommendations drawn from the research study. The briefs translate the research findings into concrete policy recommendations on the impact of remittances on food security, remittances and banking/financial services, and co-development policies and initiatives. A number of the findings and recommendations of the project were discussed at the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Manila on 30 October 2008.

15. As part of the joint INSTRAW/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project, on the theme "Gender and remittances: building gender-sensitive local development", the reports of the field research component of the project have been received from the research teams in Albania, the Dominican Republic, Lesotho, Morocco, the Philippines and Senegal. Also, as part of this project, INSTRAW and UNDP have initiated policy dialogue at the national level.

16. Field work was initiated on the INSTRAW collaborative qualitative study entitled "Gender dynamics in South-South migrations", by the Institute of Economic and Social Research of the Rafael Landívar University of Guatemala and the Danish International Development Agency. The objective of this study is to examine the migration of Guatemalan women to the south of Mexico. The study focuses on young rural women migrants who are part of transnational households, who work in the area of domestic service and live in their places of employment.

17. Joint activities with strategic partners continued to be an essential part of the Institute's work in this area. The Institute finalized agreements with the

International Organization for Migration on migration and remittances in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa; with Emory University on the situation of Dominican and Guatemalan migrant women and remittances in Atlanta, Georgia, United States; with the Network of Public Universities of the Coffee Region (Alma Mater) in Colombia on the inclusion of gender in its new Master's Degree Programme in International Migration; and with Colombian non-governmental organization Sisma Mujer, on the impact of co-development and remittances on human rights from a gender perspective.

B. Gender, governance and women's political participation at the local level

18. Since February 2006, the Institute has been implementing a three-year project entitled "Strengthening governance with a gender perspective and women's political participation at the local level", with funding from AECID. As demonstrated through the research of the Institute, women's role in shaping the political agenda needs to be significantly enhanced and their numbers in decision-making positions in local governments increased. The Institute considers that integrating a gender perspective into governance and current decentralization processes is fundamental to ensuring an equitable and inclusive sustainable human development. In addition to action-oriented research in this area, the Institute works to raise awareness among major stakeholders of the importance of women's participation in local decision-making, initiates policy dialogues and builds local institutional capacities for gender-sensitive public policy formulation. The work of the Institute in this area is being carried out in 10 countries in Latin America and three countries in the Maghreb region.

19. In March 2008, a workshop was held at the Institute's headquarters in Santo Domingo, on the theme "Challenges and opportunities for greater participation of women in local governments in Latin America". The workshop identified new challenges and opportunities to promote greater political participation of women in decision-making posts at the local level. It also resulted in the establishment of a consultative committee to strengthen gender-sensitive governance and the political participation of women in Latin America at the local level, as well as the development of a concrete workplan for 2008-2009. As part of the workplan, a capacity-building phase was initiated with activities in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guatemala. The project aims to support the creation of a nationally based organization of municipal women in Costa Rica and to strengthen the management skills of municipal women in Guatemala, in particular through the use of information and communications technology. The activities are being carried out in partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), national machinery for advancement of women, and non-governmental organizations. In Bolivia and Ecuador, the project also aims at enhancing women's skills, at the municipal level, in leadership and decision-making, as well as in communications, including the use of information and communications technology.

20. The Institute has developed specific capacity-building tools to promote women's participation and political leadership in local government planning and management. In particular, it concluded the "Pathways to learning" initiative, which aimed to facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge among women in decision-making positions in local government. This innovative capacity-building

methodology promotes learning by bringing together actors from different but related contexts in order to share their perspectives, experiences and lessons learned and apply the acquired knowledge to their individual contexts and jobs while forging strategic alliances.

21. The Institute, in collaboration with its partner Programa Regional de Capacitación en Desarrollo Rural (PROCASUR), a regional NGO based in Santiago de Chile, organized the initiative "Pathways to learning in Central America (between Costa Rica and El Salvador, August 2008) and South America" (between Bolivia and Ecuador, September 2008). Altogether over 30 women participated in the initiative, including councilwomen, women mayors and representatives of women's associations. Participants visited municipalities that had made significant efforts to incorporate gender issues in their local governance with regard to services, legislation and affirmative actions to increase women's participation. The lessons learned from the initiative will be applied by participants in their work areas.

22. The Institute and the regional training programme on gender and public policies of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Argentina held a virtual expert round table on gender-sensitive public policies in Latin America in November 2008, with the objective of discussing gender-sensitive public policies in Latin America. Approximately 80 women from academic institutions, local and national governments, international institutions, political parties and civil society organizations participated in the virtual dialogue.

23. The Institute, in partnership with the Centre for Arab Women Training and Research based in Tunis, commenced activities in June on the project "Strengthening women's leadership and participation in politics and decision-making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia", which was also financed by AECID. The project will be implemented over two years. The main objectives of the project are to share knowledge and experience on women's political participation at the national and subregional levels, to initiate a policy dialogue among key stakeholders, and to strengthen women's capacities to participate in politics and decision-making processes.

24. The first phase of this project will involve research studies and a media analysis of women's political participation in the three project countries. A series of initial meetings have been conducted with potential stakeholders of the project, including other United Nations agencies, NGOs, government entities and the media in order to begin building partnerships in support of the implementation of the project. A project brochure was also printed and distributed in French and Arabic.

25. The Institute presented its tool for analysis of electoral systems from a gender perspective at the international seminar entitled "Economic, social, cultural and environmental rights in perspective: demands from the women's movement", held in Guayaquil, Ecuador, from 7 to 9 August 2008. It aims to promote a better understanding of electoral systems to enhance women's political participation. The tool itself was evaluated favourably by a forum of experts through "iKnow Politics."³ Plans are under way to transform the tool into an online learning instrument, to be launched on the Institute's website in early 2009.

³ The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, an online workspace designed to serve the needs of elected officials, candidates, political party leaders and members, researchers, students and other practitioners interested in advancing women in politics.

26. An agreement was signed with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in support of the Observatory on Gender Parity in Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNIFEM. As part of this project, the Institute will contribute data, reports, capacity-building activities, and technical support to follow-up, analysis, information-sharing, and policymaking around issues of equality between women and men in economic, political and social areas.

27. The Institute, in collaboration with the National Women's Office of the Dominican Republic, Desarrollo Municipal Centro Americano (DEMUCA) and Progreso, an international NGO with offices in the Dominican Republic, initiated the municipal gender-audit programme, which seeks to promote gender mainstreaming in the formulation, management and evaluation of public policies in seven municipalities of the Dominican Republic. The programme includes a series of training workshops for selected municipal representatives.

28. The Institute strengthened and established alliances with existing and new partners in support of its work on gender, governance and women's political participation. Agreements were signed with DEMUCA to strengthen the political participation of women at the local level in Central America, as well as with gender machinery in the Andean region (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru).

C. Gender, peace and security

29. In the area of gender, peace and security, the Institute has continued to explore the conceptual link between security sector reform, women, peace and security and human security as its main areas of work. To that end, a revised outline of the operational framework was prepared. The framework will serve as a basis for a conceptual working paper to be ready in early 2009. This paper will include a critical analysis of the concept of human security and its relationship to human development from a gender perspective, and will address the Institute's main areas of work in security sector reform and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

30. A virtual dialogue on the theme "Gaps and challenges in gender, peace and security research", held in October 2008, will contribute to the preparation of the conceptual paper. The dialogue brought together over 100 researchers from around the world to exchange ideas and experiences on ongoing research related to human security and women, peace and security issues.

31. Together with the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice, UNIFEM and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the Institute co-organized an international conference on the theme "Crafting human security in an insecure world" (24-26 September, San Diego, California). During the conference, the Institute led a panel discussion on the theme "Advancing inclusive security in multiple settings: strategies, resources and good practices for security and civil sectors to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict-related settings", in which the Institute's work on gender and security sector reform was presented and discussed.

32. Conceptual explorations of the role of women's political participation in strengthening conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, as well as the impact

of conflict and insecurity on cross-border migration strengthened synergies with other thematic areas dealt with by the Institute. These linkages will be included in the conceptual paper and future project proposals.

33. The Institute project entitled "Women, peace and security in Somalia: implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)", implemented in collaboration with the Associazione Diaspora e Pace,⁴ was discussed at the International Conference on Women, Peace and Security in Somalia, held in Dar es Salaam, from 2 to 5 September 2008. The conference brought together over 40 women from Somalia and from the Somali diaspora with representatives of the Somali Transitional Federal Government in order to discuss gender dimensions of clan-based affiliations; the cultural and religious challenges to women's participation in the peacemaking and peacebuilding processes; and ways to enhance women's political role, including in the political elections scheduled for November 2009.

34. With the funding received from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, the Institute, in collaboration with UNFPA in the Dominican Republic, carried out an assessment of reproductive health and violence against women in post-disaster situations, looking specifically at vulnerable populations in the aftermath of tropical storm Noel. The project was launched on 9 October 2008 during a joint Institute/UNFPA event held in Santo Domingo on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction. United Nations officials and representatives from the Dominican Government and civil society discussed the results and recommendations of the assessment in the context of disaster preparedness and response in the Dominican Republic.

35. The Institute is collaborating with the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and International Alert to revise and publish the second edition of its guide to the development of national action plans on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), entitled *Securing Equality, Engendering Peace: A guide to policy and planning on women, peace and security*, which was originally published in 2006. As an input to this second edition, the Institute held in November 2008 a virtual dialogue on good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. Over 100 participants from around the world participated in the dialogue, including women working in conflict and post-conflict settings.

36. With funding from the Government of Austria, the Institute initiated its project on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in Liberia, in cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to support efforts of the Ministry of Gender and Development to improve its gender sensitive planning. The Institute and the Ministry of Gender and Development are also collaborating to draft the Liberia national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

37. As part of its ongoing work on gender training for United Nations peacekeepers, the Institute commenced an interview series with women participants in United Nations peace support operations. Questionnaires were sent out to both the gender units and focal points in United Nations peacekeeping missions, as well as to individual women peacekeepers. The lessons learned will be posted on the Institute's interactive website on gender training for peacekeepers.

⁴ A Somali women's association based in Italy.

38. The Institute's global database of gender, peace and security research institutions has been updated and is currently being redesigned. Plans are under way to capitalize on the database and dialogue in order to create a more permanent interactive network, with a view to eventually establishing a community of practice on gender, peace and security research.

IV. Resource mobilization and institutional development

A. Resource mobilization

39. In its resolution 52/3, the Commission on the Status of Women expressed satisfaction with the progress that the Institute had made in the area of resource mobilization, which had enabled the Institute to fully reimburse the subventions received in 2007, and to increase the level of voluntary funding from various donors.

40. As a result of the increased confidence shown by donors in the work of the Institute, the level of voluntary contributions to the Institute's regular operations has substantially increased, and the Institute is operating on the basis of its own resources received through voluntary contributions. The Institute has encouraged this trend and has intensified its efforts to increase the visibility of its work.

41. The financial situation of the INSTRAW Trust Fund (core activities) as at 30 November 2008 was as follows:

(United States dollars)

A. Income	
Voluntary contributions*	1 626 575.58
Interest income	26 173.46
Other/miscellaneous income	153 635.67
Total income	1 806 384.71
B. Expenditure	
Staff and other personnel costs	720 111.98
Travel	65 506.98
Contractual services	39 414.00
Operating expenses	54 233.35
Acquisitions	27 066.36
Total direct expenditure	906 332.67
Programme support costs	32 315.40
Total expenditure	938 648.07
Excess/shortfall of income over expenditure	867 736.64
Reserves and fund balances, beginning of period	1 567 342.43
Reserves and fund balances, end of period	2 435 079.07

* Voluntary contributions less voluntary contributions receivable of \$311,425.48

42. The Institute is currently negotiating multi-year funding with various potential donors, in keeping with its resource mobilization strategy and the recommendations of its Executive Board. This funding will provide sufficient resources to cover the Institute's core programme activities for a period of three years.

B. Institutional development

43. At the request of the INSTRAW Executive Board, the Department of Management of the United Nations Secretariat organized a workshop at the Institute headquarters, from 17 to 25 November 2008, to follow up on the previous workshop held in January 2008. The workshop reviewed and analysed the progress of the Institute in strengthening its institutional capacity and enhancing its positioning within the United Nations system and the global gender framework. It also outlined concrete measures to support the Institute in its efforts towards institutional strengthening, including issues related to management, programming and administrative procedures. The results of the workshop will be presented in a management letter from the Management Support Service of the Department of Management to the sixth session of the INSTRAW Executive Board to be held in early 2009.

V. Conclusions

44. In 2008, the Institute continued to consolidate its strategic planning and implementation based on its strategic framework for 2008-2011, outlining an expanded research and training programme and its annual workplans and budgets for the biennium 2008-2009. The INSTRAW Executive Board continued to provide critical oversight to its programmes and formulate policies for the activities of the Institute. It approved the Institute's work programme and budget for 2009, and reported to the Economic and Social Council and, where appropriate, to the General Assembly.

45. The Institute is strategically positioned to cooperate with Governments, national mechanisms of gender equality, civil society and relevant United Nations entities on gender aspects of migration, gender-sensitive governance and women's political participation, and women and peace and security.

46. The Institute consolidated its research and training programmes and enhanced its knowledge management capacity to ensure that research results impact policy and programme development and implementation. It improved its collaboration with United Nations entities in the area of research, and strengthened its training and capacity-building programmes, as well as enhanced its formulation of policy recommendations for Member States and civil society.

47. The level of voluntary contributions to the Institute's regular operations has increased, allowing it to operate on the basis of resources received through voluntary contributions. Multi-year funding agreements were negotiated to ensure a more stable financial base. The Institute should continue to intensify its efforts to build on this progress and enhance its visibility, and impact United Nations system work on gender equality and women's empowerment.